

The Fool's Luck™

The Way of the Commoner

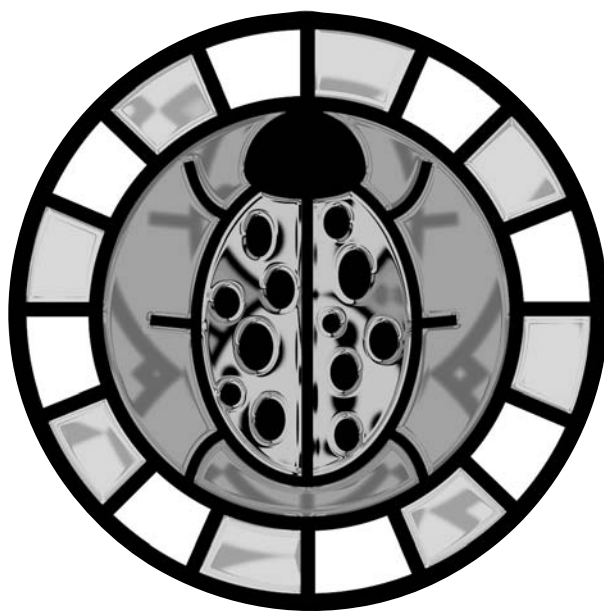


For Changeling: The Dreaming™



The Fool's Luck:™

The Way of the Commoner



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Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Summer Molt: A Faery's Tale | 4 |
| Introduction: Not to the Manor Born | 12 |
| Chapter One: To Victors, the Spoils (A Guide to Commoner History) | 16 |
| Chapter Two: Natural Orders | 50 |
| Chapter Three: Flesh and Bone | 72 |
| Chapter Four: Harvest of Dreams | 80 |
| Chapter Five: Names, Faces and Places | 92 |
| Chapter Six: Cavalcade of Commoners | 108 |
| Appendix: Piskies and Spriggan | 122 |



SUMMER MOLT: A FAERY'S TALE

*And you, are you so forgetful of your past, is there
no echo of your poets' songs, your dreamers' dreams,
your rebels' calls?*

— Emma Goldman

Julia suppressed a feeling of impending doom as she drove home from the baronial court. Arawn and Ellawyn held much more in their hearts than they voiced aloud, that Julia could plainly see. Then again, they'd actually been at King Meilge's ball in honor of the High King and Queen; the Baron and Baroness of Vellumton had witnessed firsthand the despair of lovely Faerilyth, the concern of the court and the chivalry of Sir Seif. Julia smiled at that last. Seif had visited Vellumton during the Twilight Criterion bike race and told such marvelous tales that even the normally sedate Ellawyn had cried tears of laughter. Now, thought Julia bitterly, it would be many days before the baroness saw joy again.

As she parked outside her dilapidated house in Athens' historic Normaltown district, Julia saw someone lurking on the porch, sniffing the begonias and idly batting the

wind chimes. Darkness was just starting to fall, but Julia could see her visitor stood on long slender legs covered in downy brown fur. The satyr's tail flicked nervously, and her hooves tapped out an impatient rhythm. The light breeze gently lifted her purple gauze minidress. She dropped a curtsy as Julia stepped slowly from the car.

"Lady Julia Spencer-Drake?" asked the satyr.

"I am she," replied Julia. "May I help you with something?"

To her surprise, the satyr hopped off the porch and eagerly seized her hands. "I'm so glad to meet you! I've come a long way to answer your request."

"Request?" said Julia. "But...."

"In your book. *The Annals of House Fiona*. You asked for people to tell you about history. Well, here I am!" finished the visitor with a wave of her hands.

“Ah, um, so I see. Well, do come inside and let’s get something to drink.” Julia’s good sidhe manners asserted themselves as she led the satyr into the big, high-ceilinged room that served as living, dining and kitchen areas. *Thank heavens I managed to kick most of my crap into the bedroom*, she thought as the satyr looked over the place. *But how on earth did this woman manage to look at my book? It was only sent to a few historians in Concordia, just recently at that.*

The satyr prattled on. “I’m Marina, from the County of Beacon Hills. It’s up on the border between the Duchies of Appalachia and the Triangle. I thought I could help you out.” Marina settled herself on the futon, not deigning to notice the piles of books and dirty laundry littering the room.

Opening the fridge, Julia poured two ginger ales with a splash of grenadine over ice, handing one to her guest. “Well met, then, Marina. You obviously know who I am already. What about my writing brings you here?”

Marina’s voice dropped to a whisper. “It’s no secret, m’lady, that trouble is brewing. Though slow, word does reach even our remote freehold. Our countess is a distant cousin of Meilge and our count a sworn knight of House Gwydion. Already there is tension at home over the state of the High Kingship, and if rumors resound in the tiny realm of Beacon Hills, surely they must be elsewhere. Some of the trolls are honing their weapons already. We need no new wars to tear us apart. I daresay there are wounds left unsalved from the last one. Which bring me to my point in seeing you.” The satyr took a deep breath. “In writing the history of your noble house, you said you were interested in a commoners’ view of the Accordance War. Is this still the case?” Julia nodded, eyes suddenly alight. “Then, I have a plan to propose to you. Did you ever see that TV movie a few years back, about that woman journalist who infiltrated the Playboy bunnies?”

Julia suppressed an urge to giggle. “Um, yes, I saw it; her name’s Gloria Steinheim, and she made quite a name for herself, didn’t she?”

Marina nodded soberly. “As I hope you will, m’lady, when you go among the commoners and write *their* true history. All of it, particularly that of the Accordance War. You must do it quickly, too, so people can have a chance to see their mistakes before it’s too late. Maybe if all the Kithain can read about what happened when we were a people divided all those years ago, they’ll know better in the present.”

“Well, it’s quite a clever idea,” said Julia, “but I’m afraid I still have one problem dear Gloria didn’t: I’m not a commoner, and I have no way to insinuate myself

into their good graces. Not so quickly, anyway, even if I am of House Fiona.”

“That’s where I come in,” muttered Marina. “I know a person who can...give you a makeover. I don’t mean just a bunny tail either! You can walk among the commoners and really *hear* what they have to say.” She paused anxiously. “So will you do it?”

Julia walked to the window and peered out. Here was the chance she’d dreamed about and never thought possible. The moon was full that night, and in her heart, she heard echoes of ancient cries of war and death. Could she prevent suffering among all fae by this act? Would exposing the truth of history from the commoner’s perspective cause resentment and anger? Or would it reveal their courage and honor, equal to the sidhe, revealing to the nobles that enmity with the commoners was savage and reprehensible?

Lady Julia of the Drake, historian of House Fiona, turned to the satyr. “I am ready to depart whenever you are.”



Marina asked Julia to lead her to a place where flowers grew. So they ended up at the botanical gardens, a lush setting that housed countless varieties of plants and shrubs. Marina walked to a trellis crowned with sleeping morning glories and twisted a ring on her finger. Julia had noticed it earlier, a lovely piece of work, stacked circles of gold with tiny rubies. The trellis vibrated and shone with inner light as Julia felt the stirring of Glamour. Inside the trellis, another world appeared, one that resonated with ancient power and long-forgotten lore.

“Hurry through; the gate will close in a moment,” gasped Marina, straining with the effort of focusing the ring’s power. Julia wasted no time, and the satyr followed her. The trellis vanished, and now they stood in a beautiful glade of fir trees. Soft light filtered through the evergreens, illuminating rich loamy soil. A few squirrels chattered at them, and Julia laughed in delight as they came closer, begging for nuts.

“Why, this is the Dreaming!” she cried aloud. “You didn’t tell me we were coming here.” The satyr merely smiled. Julia had forgotten how even the Near Dreaming where they now stood changed one’s perceptions; the Mists usually clouded her thoughts when she returned to the waking lands. Marina looked more feral than before; her horns were longer and curlier, her tail more bushy. And there was much more of the satyr to behold, for she had shed most of her clothing save a light silken sarong that barely covered her

breasts and thighs. She was quite captivating, and the sidhe drank in the lovely sight of her.

"We have a long way to travel," said Marina. "Stay on the trod, whatever you see and feel. The Firchlís may pass and change everything, but don't stray from the path! Do you understand?" Julia nodded, and they set off down the silvery road of light that lay before them. It was oh so tempting to run and play with the many creatures she saw, tiny flying horses, singing caterpillars and even rabbits in tuxedos, walking upright. Nothing she saw stayed the same for long. Even the scent and sound of the place was beguiling; the sidhe smelled apple and cherry blossoms and listened to distant music that made her heart ache with a memory just out of reach. If she could only hear more! But Julia followed her guide and did not step off the trod. Presently, a strong wind blew around them, whistling and stirring up sand. The sidhe blinked, and suddenly she stood at the edge of a verdant cornfield. The silver path led through the knee-high stalks, and on the far side, Julia saw a small village.

"We'll go to the inn and see if Aldo is there. We need a stiff drink before we meet with Cruithne," murmured Marina. Julia nodded and followed. Only as she passed by the mill on the edge of the village and stopped to splash her face clean in the water trough did she see her own appearance. Gone were the wire-rimmed spectacles; her eyes gleamed silvery gray, the light of them piercing and bright. Now her dull-brown hair hung in thick waves reaching the earth. Her clothing had changed too; instead of jeans and a tank top, her slender form was clad in a deep burgundy cotehardie embroidered with rampant silver lions and heraldic trumpets. A silver girdle inset with ruby roses circled her waist. If only I looked this good back home, she mused.

Marina had walked ahead to what was clearly the inn; a big sign hung outside the door, proclaiming it "The Dragon's Den: Food and Spirits." A finely dressed boggan smoking a pipe sat on a bench outside; his eyes were pert and his face ruddy and well scrubbed. He jumped up as the satyr approached.

"Well met, Marina!" he said, eagerly kissing her hands. "It has been too many days since you came here."

"There have been many tasks to perform in the waking world," sighed Marina. "But let me introduce my guest, Lady Julia of the Drake." The boggan bowed deeply. "Lady Julia, this is my good friend Aldo, who runs the finest inn this side of Arcadia."

"It is a beautiful place," said Julia graciously, and so it was. The inn was built from dark timbers and neatly daubed walls. A brand new thatched roof crowned the two-story building. Aldo had polished the diamond-pane windows and brass door fittings to perfection. Boxes of bright flowers sat all around the entrance and from inside came the warm scent of fresh baked bread and beeswax tapers.

"Come in, come in," Aldo motioned with his chubby arms. "The best for you, always!"

After a jug of good ale, crusty bread with honey butter and a venison and vegetable tart, Julia felt warm and happy inside. She yawned, a little disheartened by Marina's next words.

"I wish we could stay the night," the satyr said wistfully, "but I would take Lady Julia to the keep before sunset."

"That's wise," replied Aldo, letting a perfect smoke ring rise from his pipe. "Don't want to run into the dragon, especially as you two aren't dressed for battle."

"Dragon?" Julia was wide awake now.

"Oh yes. It's been there as long as I can remember. Don't ask me how the sage manages to avoid it, but he does somehow," shuddered Aldo.

"They have an understanding," said Marina shortly. "So if you're ready, Lady Julia?" The sidhe nodded and shook off her sleepiness. If Marina was taking her to some sort of sage, probably a satyr, she'd have to be alert and on her toes. She thanked the boggan, and the pair resumed their journey. Outside, a cool wind blew, pushing her to wakefulness. The sun was just setting, and for the first time, Julia saw their destination: a mountain fortress that towered above the village. Dark mists had covered it earlier, and it still seemed a foreboding place. But Marina said nothing and just trotted off toward the mountain's lowest crags. Presently, Julia saw that steps were carved into the rocks. Marina climbed easily, and Julia was surprised not to be winded as they reached the summit. Before her stood an old keep, little more than a pair of towers joined by a wall, surrounding a single great hall. Tattered pennons fluttered in the breeze, but Julia couldn't make out the heraldry. Marina seemed to know her way around and walked through the heavy oak door in the nearest tower, leading the way into a courtyard. There were no horses, carts or piles of hay, only gray stone that sang each time their feet struck the ground. The echo against the walls was chilling, and Julia shuddered; she felt someone unseen watching their approach. Presently, they reached the entrance

to the hall, two great wooden doors banded in black iron which swung open unaided as Marina approached them. Inside was a huge chamber where lights from a hundred candles flickered off the walls. Rushes covered the floor, and all around was the smell of wood smoke and dust.

"Up the stairway," motioned Marina, indicating the wide stone steps to one side. Once again, the sidhe followed, from the stairs to the landing, down a hall to a room. The door was open, and from inside came a deep voice.

"Must you lurk all evening outside my chamber? As if I hadn't waited all day for you to arrive!"

Julia crossed the threshold and beheld...a *human*? The voice came not from an ancient satyr as she'd expected but from some wizened old mortal coot who gave her a cool once over. He seemed to be appraising her not with desire but like a cat looking over its meal. She stiffened her backbone and met his gaze, for no noble of House Fiona ever knew fear, save when a lover was in danger. Something about his eyes was hypnotic; they were deep green with gold flecks and large, dark pupils. His head was nearly bald and what hair he had was wispy and gray; he wore no beard. His robes were rather plain, hanging to the floor, dyed nut brown. She looked away after a moment, noticing for the first time that rows and rows of bookshelves surrounded her. Thousands of volumes must have been in the room; the shelves stretched past the old man and were so tall, Julia couldn't see the far walls.

The old man seemed not to notice her wandering eyes and wasted no time with friendly greetings; he didn't even bother standing up from the desk where he was writing. "I am Cruithne Alexis, a sage renowned for many seasons," he said in a haughty tone. "My good servant Marina has told me that you wish to go among the commoners of the Kithain and write their history. And that you need a disguise, to become one of them in body, in order to complete this task. Tell me, then, why the mask? Why not just be yourself?"

How did he know? thought the sidhe. *Marina has been with me the entire time; surely she didn't have a chance to tell him. And what's this about her being a servant?* "Because," answered Julia aloud, "I want the *real* history. I know I could get much of the truth if I just went as myself, but there are things commoners would never tell a noble. I want to know how people *honestly* feel, even if it's not too flattering to me and other nobles."

"But don't you think that such actions will anger the commoners when they find out? Wouldn't they say their words were being stolen, filtered through some sidhe trickster's voice? Will not this make them more resentful than ever?" Cruithne stared hard at her.

"Perhaps. But I will faithfully record their words, both fair and foul, particularly about the Accordance War. Other historians of the Kithain have been too afraid to describe what really happened during those dark years. They were terrible times, the Night of Iron Knives, the death of Dafyll, the Battles of Manhattan. Someone must paint the complete picture for everyone to know what those times were like! Because such destruction must never happen again."

The sage nodded. "I see. And I believe you. I think you will make the best effort you can to write this history. So I am inclined to grant your request and shape you into one of the commoners, that you may walk as one among equals. I must of course consult certain materials first, so wait here. You may browse my library until I return." The old scholar rose from his chair and walked down one of the long rows, vanishing after a few moments.

Julia had never seen so many books in her life, especially not with titles like *The Chronicle of Denbigh*, *The Bestiary of Kelidan* or *The Boke of Wurms of Alban*. Who was this man, and where did he find such tomes, Julia wondered. Certainly he was no Kithain. Was he a mortal sorcerer? After walking up and down several rows and musing on the old man, the sidhe found that the sight of so many books made her head swim, so she looked elsewhere.

On the mantle was the most striking portrait Julia had ever seen. It was a human lady, not beautiful exactly, but someone who surely must have been noble, so proudly she held herself. Her dark brown hair was coiled into braids crowning her head. The woman wore a formfitting scarlet gown decorated at the throat and wrists by exquisite embroidery in gold and green threads; was it a late Norman style? In her white slender hands, the lady held a rose, and her dark eyes glared down in clear challenge. The sidhe stared at the picture "Who was she?" wondered Julia aloud.

"She was, and is, a very great lady," replied her host, coming back into the room and seating himself at the desk again. "We taught each other about the game of chess, many years ago." He smiled, thinking of those ancient nights. "But now, onto your dilemma. I have consulted my references and believe I can accomplish your request. What can you offer me, little faery, in return for what you seek?"



Julia knew this was coming. "I am of the blood of House Fiona," she said proudly. "We are well known for our passion. I would give you a night of my caresses for this feat of magic."

Cruithne laughed long and hard. "And pray tell, what would I do with a night of memories? You're a pretty little thing, I must admit, but I have no interest in sleeping with faeries. What else have you to offer?"

Well, well, thought the sidhe, *maybe it would embarrass the poor old fellow*. Aloud she said, "We are also known for our prowess in arms. I would be willing to undertake a battle for you, provided it is not against my own kind."

"Again, I have no need for warriors," replied the sage. "Do you have aught else to give?"

Julia was stumped. "What do you want?" she asked finally.

"Marina told me you were a scholar, a writer, a historian," Cruithne said. "Why have you not offered me these skills?"

"I had no idea one of your stature in such things would need one as young and inexperienced as I," answered Julia truthfully. "You have more tomes and writings than any ten Kithain could produce in a lifetime."

"But how do you think I became so wise? You seek love and passion however you find it, yes?" Julia nodded assent. "I seek knowledge in the same manner. I know you have something I would find useful. For example, Marina has told me you were writing a history of your house and that others have done the same. That would be quite sufficient."

"But..." Julia's mind reeled. "These things are for the Kithain. How can a human possibly understand them?"

"Leave that to me," said Cruithne in a cold voice. "Swear an oath that you will bring me your writing and that of the others, and in good faith, I will perform the ritual. You will have a year and a day to complete your work and return here with the materials I have requested. Fail, and you shall forever remain a commoner, and more-



over, I will see that your secret is told to everyone, high born and low. Do we have an agreement?" Julia inclined her head. "Swear then!" He stood and held out his hands which she clasped in her own.

"I, Julia of the Drake, Lady of House Fiona, do hereby swear that I shall deliver unto Cruithne Alexis, as token of services rendered, the histories of the noble houses of the Kithain, within one year and one day. If I should fail to honor this oath, may I forever remain enchanted as one of the common folk and may all the world know my falseness and dishonor."

"And I, Cruithne Alexis, do hear what you freely give and in return will grant the wish of your heart." He released her hands and returned to his desk where he began flipping through several books. "Ah, here is what I was looking for. Marina, run to the larder and fetch a potato for me, along with the bottle labeled *plebeius cruror*." The satyr trotted off to do the sage's bidding. Julia, of course, was not afraid, despite Cruithne's rather devious smile. "Stand there, girl," said the old man, pointing to a space of

floor not covered by carpet. Julia complied, seething at his rudeness as the sage began sketching a rough chalk circle around her. He then pulled out a sharp dagger, spitting on the blade before handing it to the sidhe. Marina hurried quickly into the room, handing Cruithne the potato and a small corked pottery jar. He gave the potato to Julia, then opened the jar and gently poured the red flaky contents around the chalked circle.

"Now, start peeling. Don't stop until I tell you to do so! Make sure the peels fall inside the circle, or this will not work. Begin!"

Julia hadn't peeled too many potatoes in her life, and with those few, she'd used a peeler. The knife wasn't working too well, so the process was slow. Small strips of potato fell at her feet. Outside the circle, Cruithne was chanting in a guttural language as he walked around and around the circle. Sweat began pouring down the sidhe's brow; the temperature was rising quickly. At the circle's edges, the rust-colored dust began to liquefy, running over the rough stone, into cracks, then finally touching Julia's

slipped feet. It burned! The stench of rotting meat filled her nostrils, but still she peeled the potato. Almost all the potato's outer flesh was gone, save for a few black spots which she began cutting away, yet the knife seemed larger than before, or else her hands were smaller and clumsier. Julia kept carving away until she held a perfect, round white potato.

"Stop!" called Cruithne, and she let her arms fall to her sides. Looking at him, Julia realized something was terribly wrong. There was an odd thudding in her heart, and her mouth and throat felt parched. Her hands shook, not from fatigue, but from some other emotion. It was fear, something she'd seldom felt in her life, for unlike most of her noble house, she'd found passion in affairs of the mind, not the heart. There had been no lover in mortal danger to make her heart pound so. Now, Julia couldn't stop the terror she felt watching the old sage, and what was worse, the fear she felt made her *more* afraid. It was awful, and she stood there, shaking.

"You may come out of the circle now," said the sage, in a softer voice. "All is well, and the spell has worked wonderfully well. It's been many a year since I attempted something so extraordinary, but I still have the touch," he chuckled. "Marina, give her the mirror."

The satyr, whose eyes were huge with wonder, handed Julia a round wooden hand mirror. Julia took it; it felt heavy and seemed bigger to her, like the potato. She glanced into it and saw...No! It was impossible! Yet it was the wish of her heart, she had to admit. Cruithne had given her exactly what she asked for, no more, no less.

Gone was Julia's fair skin and high cheekbones; they had been replaced by a deeply tanned complexion, plump cheeks and a double chin. Her hair was now tied up in a practical bun, the elegant gown changed into a simple tunic and apron, nonetheless prettily embroidered with

carrots, pea pods and radishes. Where once her hands had been slender and soft, the palms were callused and square, the fingers short and thick. Had she *really* stood over six feet tall before? Now she barely topped four. Julia fought down an overwhelming desire to dust all the sage's books and wondered why the lovely satyr no longer stirred her heart as she assimilated the fact that the transformation had been both physical and mental.

"I asked myself," mused Cruithne aloud, "what would be the best way for you to *help* your fellow fae. And the Dreaming has given an answer. Go now, little boggan, and take with you this token which shall allow you to remember all." The sage handed her what looked like a silvery sheet of mica, about the size of a saucer. "You have a year and one day to complete your work and return here to honor your promise." He nodded to Marina, dismissing them both without a second thought. Julia was only too glad to leave; Cruithne frightened her with his cold ways.

The walk from the old keep took time because the boggan had difficulty keeping up with the nimble-footed satyr. The two said little, until Marina broke the silence.

"So where will you begin? And what should I call you now? 'Lady Julia' doesn't really seem appropriate, does it?"

"Oh, I think I'll use the name Gloria McAlley," smiled the boggan. "It'll do for now. As to where I'll begin..." She looked at the slowly sinking sun. "At the beginning. With voices that will fade ere too much time passes, those who are old enough to remember times before the Resurgence. Those who fought in the Accordance War. Politicos, travelers, farmers. Mostly just anyone who will talk to me."

"I don't think it'll be a problem," replied Marina, helping the new commoner onto the Dreaming's path.



INTRODUCTION: NOT TO THE MANOR BORN

"A shepherd and a harp-player! Fool! Fool!"

— Blodwen Rowlands in Susan Cooper's *Silver on the Tree*

In the years before the Shattering, they were tricksters and warriors, nomads and sages. Then suddenly, they were left behind to cope with a dark and mirthless world. They survived for centuries through thick and thin by learning to live among humans. Then as wonder reawakened in the mortal lands, the nobles returned and challenged them through force of arms to take their proper places as humble subjects once more.

These are the commoners, changelings of diverse kith and deed. Politics, Courts and goals divide them, but one thing binds the commoners together: the fact that they are not of the noble kith of sidhe. Though a commoner may have a title, he's still baser in the eyes of many purple bloods and an uppity pretender to some among his own kind. Commoners thus walk a fine line between honoring the traditions of the distant past and looking towards the promise of change in the future.

The Making of a Common Fae

Don't make the mistake of thinking most commoners are toy makers, bakers or sidhe toadies. Certainly many of them are salt of the earth types, practical in outlook and dedicated to tradition. But just as many are interested in consensus and peaceful reforms, and these folk often work through the Parliament of Dreams, where titled commoners have 20% of the votes and untitled commoners have 38%. Of course, the commoners also have their share of anarchists and terrorists who'd just as soon boot the sidhe back to Arcadia. Other commoners are talented crafters, musicians, mercenaries, healers, teachers and leaders. Among all the commoner kith are many heroes and cowards, sinners and saints.

In terms of numbers, the majority of Kithain are commoners. In fact, they make up about 95% of the changelings in Concordia. The problem with this is that the sidhe population, a mere 5%, controls 42% of the seats in the Parliament of Dreams. Moreover, sidhe monarchs sit on every Concordian throne save one, that of the Kingdom of the Feathered Snake, where the troll Duke Topaz has an uneasy rule. Many commoners are actually quite content with sidhe leadership; the Shining Host is naturally impressive and certainly has the inborn ability to rule. On the other hand, the commoners have lived through the assorted revolutions and ages of enlightened mortal politics. Some of the principles of democracy and equality have rubbed off on them. Too bad the sidhe don't buy into that whole equal rights for all scene.

The Matter of Titled Commoners

Not surprisingly, outlooks on titled commoners are as varied as the Kithain themselves. Many sidhe and not a few commoners take traditional, conservative perspectives on the issue. Moderates who straddle the fence are the second largest group, while extremists at either end of the political spectrum are the smallest minority.

Sidhe

Sidhe Traditionalists have three basic rules relative to titled commoners. Rule one: Once a commoner, always a commoner. Rule two: The sidhe, not the commoners, are meant to rule. Rule three: If you're foolish enough to have doubts, see rules one and two.

Sidhe Reformers, on the other hand, judge people as individuals; if someone has a title, they presume the person deserves it until

she proves otherwise. For now, sidhe do hold most of the ruling positions; however, they can't govern without the will of the people, and that means the support of the commoners. By giving titles to deserving commoners, these sidhe believe they can maintain that strong support.

Sidhe Modernists take a practical tact. They acknowledge that this isn't the ancient world; Traditionalist sidhe and the stodgier commoners need to get with the program and realize that all Kithain are in the same leaky boat on a sea of Banality. Clinging to the distant past will get everyone in trouble.

For more information on sidhe political viewpoints, see **Nobles: The Shining Host**.

Untitled Commoners

Like the sidhe, untitled commoners are sharply divided on the issue of their own people having titles.

Conservatives think having a title might be okay, if it was given for some extraordinary reason such as bravery in battle. But the bottom line is that commoners aren't cut out to be rulers. That's the sidhe's bailiwick, and commoners need to stay out of it and stop being upstarts.

Moderates acknowledge that the sidhe are meant to be the lords and ladies of all the fae; it's been that way since the dawn of time, after all. On the other hand, the ancient ancestors of the Kithain couldn't have predicted events such as the Shattering and the way commoners took up the reins of command. What's needed in these modern times, the moderates say, is a balance between the sidhe, who have the inborn ability to rule wisely and well, and the commoners, who know far more about the mortal lands. Titled commoners can help bridge the gap between commoner kith and noble sidhe.

Radicals have a simple and predictable rhetoric: Commoners are equal to the sidhe in every way, and just as likely to make good rulers. Keeping the commoners down is criminal and must be stopped at once, by any means necessary.

For more information on commoner politics, see **Chapter Two: Natural Orders**.

The Horse's Mouth

So how do the titled commoners themselves feel? Most are accepting and loyal to the Parliament of Dreams and the sidhe, yet low key about the whole affair; they realize they walk a tightrope between denying their roots and using their power for the good of all Kithain. A few are despots. Even fewer keep their titles secret. Scholars of several noble houses have pointed out that no commoner has ever refused a title offered. This might well be true, though why would any sidhe ever admit to witnessing such a refusal?

How to Use This Book

The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner is an overview of the history, politics and social lives of commoners. It's a compilation of useful facts, long-kept secrets and an inside look at the lives of rank and file Kithain. This book also offers a few basic facts on changelings in other parts of the world. Storytellers should become familiar with the contents, and ideally, pick and choose what they'd like to use in their chronicles. **The Fool's Luck** will also be useful to players wanting to get an idea of the commoner mindset. Chapters include:

Summer Molt: A Faery's Tale, a story that sets up the connective thread throughout this sourcebook;

Introduction: Not to the the Manor Born, a brief summary of this book and some suggestions on further reading and ways to set mood for a commoner chronicle;

Chapter One: To Victors, the Spoils, a down in the trenches look at the many long years of commoner history. This chapter also includes a detailed accounting of the years between the Shattering and the Resurgence, along with many vivid tales of the Accordance War;

Chapter Two: Natural Orders, an in-depth guide to the politics and society of the commoner fae, as well as their outlooks on Gallain and Prodigals;

Chapter Three: Flesh and Bone, numerous suggestions for players and Storytellers on creating commoner characters. This chapter includes new Abilities, Merits, Flaws and an Art for commoners, Metamorphosis;

Chapter Four: Harvest of Dreams, material that is meant for the Storyteller's eyes only. This chapter has general suggestions on running a commoner chronicle as well as some potent story seeds to involve commoner characters;

Chapter Five: Names, Faces and Places, a gallery of commoner heroes and villains that can add sugar and spice, or piss and vinegar, to your chronicle;

Chapter Six: Cavalcade of Commoners, a selection of several commoner templates that can inspire players or serve the Storyteller in a pinch; and

Appendix: Piskies and Spriggan, two new commoner kith.

Theme

The overarching theme of this book is the maelstrom of tradition and modernity in strife. Conservative commoners like the protection of the noble sidhe and enjoy whatever rights they're granted; they put their trust in the sidhe's innate sense of fairness and noblesse oblige. Moderates want equal rights for all, administered by whoever is best for the task; logically this has fallen to sidhe in the past, but the future may change all that. David ap Ardry ap Gwydion, the Commoner King, has disappeared, and no one knows what may follow. Radicals want the usurper nobles dethroned, pure and simple; after all, where were all those fancy sidhe when the going got tough in the Shattering? For now, cooler heads prevail, and neither the arch-conservatives nor the radicals can get a clear upper hand over the moderates. But with the disappearance of the High King, what will happen to the steady peace? Traditional commoners may side with their respective nobles while the radicals see this as a perfect time for revolution. The moderates might well be caught in the middle, with darkness on one side and shadow on the other. The future is hopelessly murky for the commoners at present.

Mood

Most commoners want to maintain an even keel, and often this translates into a mood of false optimism. Things are better than ever, really! Are times as unpleasant as in the Accordance War? No. Do all nobles keep power exclusively for themselves? No. But there are more than a few nobles, such as the Beltaine Blade, who would shed few tears if the commoners were completely

downtrodden and subservient. Most important to the stalwart commoners is keeping up the appearance that all's well. Of course it's a big facade; just don't tell anyone. Wear a cheerful face at all times, or adopt a grumpy exterior that others can laugh at behind your back. Never let others see how sidhe or commoner extremists scare you to death.

Further Enlightenment

Many political writings are, well, dull as oatmeal. If you're honestly interested in learning more about political thought, pick up an anthology that contains brief excerpts from writers such as Jefferson, Locke, Lenin, Marx and Mill. Another useful read is *Safire's Political Dictionary* by William Safire, which puts a lot of basic terms at your fingertips. If political strife is going to play an important part in your chronicle, you probably should know something about the traditional meanings of words like radical, liberal and conservative.

In the matter of literature, consider going back to some original source material for ideas. The *Eddas* of Scandinavia, Finland's *Kalevala* and the *Mabinogion* of Wales are great tales and chock full of mythic threads for a commoner **Changeling** chronicle. Probably most players and storytellers have read the works of Tolkien, but if you have time to take another glance at *The Hobbit*, consider it in the light of a commoner caught up in events far beyond his reckoning. Charles de Lint has also written a number of excellent and inspiring tales.

With mood music, you can take a variety of approaches. Industrial rock with a repetitive, mechanistic sound is one option; this category includes musicians such as Machines of Loving Grace, My Life with the Thrill Kill Cult and Nine Inch Nails. Needless to say, *The Crow* soundtrack is a great choice. Another option is stoic classical music; German and Russian composers such as Wagner, Orff and Stravinsky are especially appropriate. Political rock, with performers like U2, Pink Floyd and Bob Marley, as well as political punk and hardcore bands, is another option. Finally, classic rock from the late 1960s and 1970s can provide just the right note of nostalgia.

From the big screen, options are endless, from the rich nobles versus the poor farmers in *Rob Roy* to David Bowie as a thrilling Goblin King in *Labyrinth*. Movies that pit the rank and file worker against the powerful corporate manager can also be inspiring. *Being There*, the cinematic version of Jerzy Kosinsky's satirical novel, shows a simple gardener caught up in a web of chaotic politics. *Revolution* and *Hidden Fortress*, the Akira Kurosawa classic that was an inspiration for George Lucas' *Star Wars*, both show warfare from the perspective of common folks.

Lexicon

Aghlabib — The Maghreb, northern Africa.

Caliphate of Cedars — The Levant, the eastern Mediterranean.

Conservative — Commoner political viewpoint that advocates continued sidhe rule; they are generally against ennobling commoners except in extraordinary circumstances. Similar to sidhe Traditionalists.

Empire of the Caucasus — The mortal lands of Turkey and the Black Sea basin.

Five Years War — The conflict taking place in Europe after the Resurgence; comparable to the Accordance War, the War of Ivy and the '69.

Galacian Confederation — Southern, central and eastern Europe; a commoner center of power.

Hibernia — The mortal land of Ireland.

Isles of the Wandering Dream — The mortal lands of Australia and New Zealand.

Isle of Snowflakes — The mortal land of Iceland.

Isle of the Mighty — The mortal lands of England (Albion), Scotland (Caledonia) and Wales (Cymru).

Lios Alfar — Faeries of light; the Seelie Court; term used frequently in Dalarna and Jutland.

Kingdom of Dalarna — The mortal lands of Norway and Sweden.

Kingdom of Golden Threads — The mortal lands of Belgium and Luxembourg.

Kingdom of Flowers — The mortal land of the Netherlands.

Kingdom of Iberia — The mortal lands of Spain and Portugal.

Kingdom of Jutland — The mortal land of Denmark; the king uses the title of Jarl of Jutland.

Kingdom of Neustria — The mortal land of France, staunchly sidhe Traditionalist.

Moderate — Commoner political viewpoint that supports continued sidhe rule with strong advisory councils of commoners. They also support awarding titles to deserving commoners. Similar to sidhe Modernists.

Modernist — Sidhe political impulse that advocates acceptance and embrace of the modern world rather than clinging to the old.

Noble — A sidhe; commoners with a noble title are called titled or ennobled commoners rather than nobles to distinguish them from sidhe.

Nubia — Northeast Africa.

Radical — Commoner political viewpoint supporting full equality and joint rule between sidhe and commoners. Similar to sidhe Modernists, but more outspoken in their beliefs.

Reformist — Sidhe political impulse that desires constitutional monarchy.

Restorationist — Commoner term for sidhe during the Accordance War.

Royalist — Commoners who fought with the sidhe in the Accordance War.

Sultanate of Hejaz — The mortal lands of the Arabian peninsula.

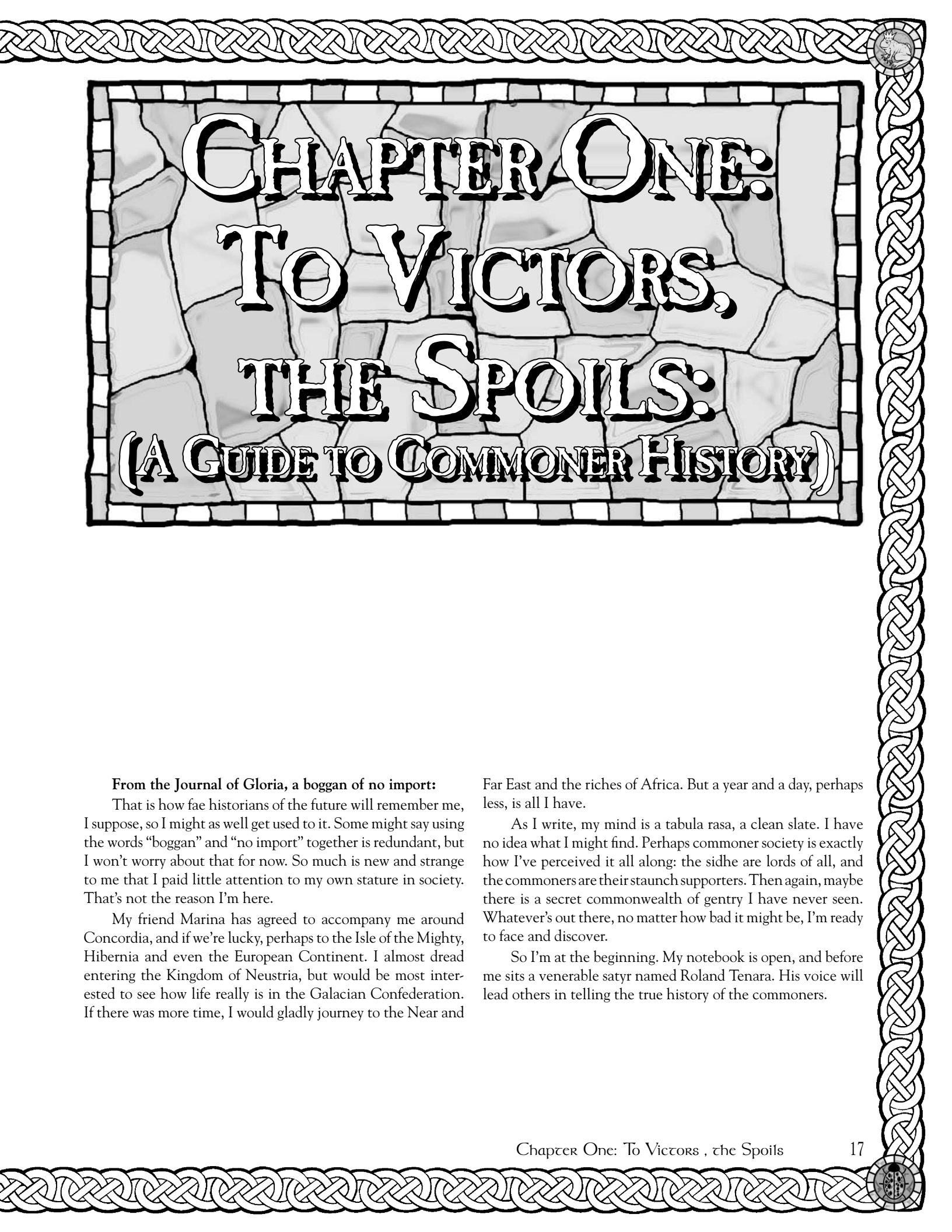
Svart Alfar — Faeries of darkness; the Unseelie Court. Term used frequently in Jutland and Dalarna.

Traditionalist — Sidhe political impulse believing inherently in sidhe leadership; note that some trolls and boggans also follow this impulse.

VAW — Veterans of the Accordance War, a commoner society.

War of Ivy — The British version of the Accordance War.





CHAPTER ONE: TO VICTORS, THE SPOILS: (A GUIDE TO COMMONER HISTORY)

From the Journal of Gloria, a boggan of no import:

That is how fae historians of the future will remember me, I suppose, so I might as well get used to it. Some might say using the words “boggan” and “no import” together is redundant, but I won’t worry about that for now. So much is new and strange to me that I paid little attention to my own stature in society. That’s not the reason I’m here.

My friend Marina has agreed to accompany me around Concordia, and if we’re lucky, perhaps to the Isle of the Mighty, Hibernia and even the European Continent. I almost dread entering the Kingdom of Neustria, but would be most interested to see how life really is in the Galacian Confederation. If there was more time, I would gladly journey to the Near and

Far East and the riches of Africa. But a year and a day, perhaps less, is all I have.

As I write, my mind is a tabula rasa, a clean slate. I have no idea what I might find. Perhaps commoner society is exactly how I’ve perceived it all along: the sidhe are lords of all, and the commoners are their staunch supporters. Then again, maybe there is a secret commonwealth of gentry I have never seen. Whatever’s out there, no matter how bad it might be, I’m ready to face and discover.

So I’m at the beginning. My notebook is open, and before me sits a venerable satyr named Roland Tenara. His voice will lead others in telling the true history of the commoners.

In The Beginning

*When she laughed on the water and the wind was her horn,
When she laughed on the water and the wind was her horn,*

*The lady laughed and everything was born The lady laughed
and everything was born*

*When she lit the sun and light gave him birth When she lit the
sun and light gave him birth*

The lord of the dance first appeared on the earth.

— “Lord of the Dance,” traditional

How did the fae come to be? Surely you don't want me to start that far back? I'm a historian, not a theologian. Well, all right, just a little, then, since you asked for it, here 'tis: I. Don't. Know. How's that for an answer? Don't look so hurt, what do you want me to say? You'll get a new answer from every closet philosopher you meet. The fae are made from the dreams of mortals. The fae are the children of the Tuatha de Danann. Dana herself created us. More than likely, they're all true, in their own way. The mythic times are just that, mythic. Just like a story changes with each new telling, our past changes with time. The past is reflected in the Now, and time is fluid. Cave paintings were magical, for they fixed an event in time. Previously, reality had nothing to bind it; for the most part, what went before depended on what the storyteller believed—or rather, what the storyteller chose to say. And that is another kind of magic.

Then, here come the clay tablets, the stone, the paper. Writing pinned down history like a butterfly on an entomologist's board. Things were fixed in place. What your grandfather knew, you also knew, and so did your neighbor. No, of course not everyone in Babylon was literate, but someone was. And that's another evil of writing: it begat the bureaucrat, the scourge of the world, the right hand of Banality.

There you have it. Mythic philosophy is a tale told by a besotted satyr, full of drivel and musings, signifying a waste of time. Happy? Good. Let's move on.

The Sundering

As you've probably heard, most Kithain believe that the Sundering began the moment the iron was first forged. It's certainly a fine, poetic myth, and since poetry and myth fills our very natures, what could be more appropriate? As for myself, though, I think the Sundering began the moment someone said, “I don't believe,” and meant it. Behind stone walls, before a warm fire, it's easier to ignore the monster crashing through the underbrush, or the blood drake's eyes gleaming in the dark. And it's a short



The Sundering

c. 500 BC — The Sundering begins

step from ignoring to disbelieving. When the early civilizations turned to science and logic rather than their old gods and spirits to explain the world's mysteries, the old gods began to die, and the power of Dreams wavered.

I'd say we satyrs felt it before most. After all, Greece had a reputation for being jam-packed with philosophers and nascent scientists. Our friends to the north, the Celts, still believed in ways that were comfortable and familiar to us. So we traveled the length and breadth of Europe and began to mingle with other kith. Now, bear in mind, when the world was young and the fae were new, the kith weren't mixed together as they are now. Trolls haunted the Nordic forests, while satyrs frolicked on Mediterranean shores. The sluagh skulked in Slavic fens and the redcaps haunted highland crags. Even in the Dreaming, we were what you might call homebodies. But time passed. Populations increased. Peoples migrated or were invaded. The Kithain began to move around a bit as well.

And what of the Great and Terrible Sidhe, Masters of All? Well, the sidhe were the Great and Terrible, but they were also the Aloof. For the most part, they stayed in Arcadia or the Dreaming. The other kith, who became known as the Common Folk, were the fae mortals had the most dealings with. When children were bad, parents called upon the sluagh. Boggans mended and cleaned the cottages of respectful families. Nockers dwelt in mines and caves, aiding some and cursing others deep inside the living rock. Satyrs could be found basking in quiet glades or cavorting in boisterous revels, bringing delight and dismay in equal measure. Redcaps frequented the old castles and windswept crags, devouring the unwary traveler. Eshu wandered the desert lands to the south, whispering tales to those lucky or unlucky enough to find them.

Yes, yes, the Courts were there, always have been (always in the relative sense. Don't be smart with me, young boggan). In the old times, the Courts didn't mingle so freely. Each knew their place. From Beltaine to Samhain, the Seelie Court held sway, while the dark half of the year belonged to the Unseelie Court. Sometimes the fae merely changed their allegiance rather than physically being replaced, or so I've been told. I don't know how common this was, for our memories are muddled and our records nonexistent.

Who? The Shadow Court? Um, you really shouldn't listen to such nonsense, my dear. The Shadow Court has always been a Samhain ritual, nothing more.

What you really should read are some of the noble chroniclers, my dear. Weyland, Arnel, Prosporn, Drake — they give excellent (if kithocentric) accounts of the old times. But know that they were more concerned with glorious quests and epic romances than life in the mundane world. Perhaps if they didn't have their heads in the clouds all the time, they could have seen the coming darkness.

For our own part, we spent as much time in the mortal world as in the Dreaming. A few of the more curious ones took on mortal flesh for a while, so they could live among humans and teach or learn from them at will. No one could have guessed that the changeling way would one day be our final recourse.

Despite the gradual weakening of the Dreaming in the mortal realm, we were still having a fine time. There were more dreamers than before, and many still believed in the old ways. The Christian Church was a minor problem in some quarters, but it didn't have the strength to drive us away. In fact, we got along splendidly with the so-called Celtic Church, founded by Columba, Brendan and others in Ireland, Wales, Scotland and northern England. As in the case of many evangelicals far from Rome, the early Celtic Christians were relatively tolerant of divergent beliefs. Rather than overthrow the old beliefs, the Irish incorporated them into the Christian belief structure. Many of the monks were powerful dreamers and created incomprehensibly beautiful works of art, in metal and in illuminated manuscripts. In my opinion, every changeling should make a pilgrimage to Dublin to see the Book of Kells and the Ardagh Chalice. You'll get a Glamour buzz just ogling the craftsmanship! Many of our people lived within monasteries, drinking from the dreams and Glamour and inspiring ever-greater artist expressions of religious zeal.

As the centuries went past, Rome had its way, and the Irish Church grew rigid and intolerant. Still, the respite was good while it lasted.

Across the Water

A dreamer, loved the seas more than the land which sired him, determined to risk all for a dream, the dream of finding a fair land across the oceans, unknown and unproved.

— Ieuan Brechfa

As Banality slowly pushed away the Dreaming, some of the most adventurous of Kithain inspired mortals to seek fabled lands across the great ocean. As such things happen, many intrepid explorers never made it back. A handful found the land which would later be called North America. The first European known to see North America was Bjarni Herjolfsson, a Kinain who got lost on a trip to Greenland and found Newfoundland instead. He told a troll he knew, and the race was on. In the early 11th century, Leif Erikson landed on Vinland (as they called the new land), accompanied by trolls in mortal form. It was shortly after landfall that the fae noticed other fae spirits watching them. The trolls met with the Nunnehi, strong but not threatening, and the natives, called skraelings, who treated them with cautious respect. Coming from curious and opportunistic stock, the giants spoke of peace and trade. Unfortunately, hope of peaceful

Opening of the West

1023 — Trolls open a trod from Vinland to Norway

1171 — Dreamstone used to open a trod from Caer Madoc to the British Isles

coexistence died quickly; Leif's brother, Thorvald, slew several of the native people. Warfare was constant, and the European settlements withered after a score of years. Only a few trolls stayed behind, and through a great ritual they opened the first trod between the New World and the Old. These trolls held the Dream path against Nunnehi and skraelings for over three hundred years, until the path closed of its own accord. After that, I couldn't say what happened to the guardians, whether they followed and were lost on the path trying to return, or whether they simply stayed in the westerlands. I do know that chimerical stones bearing the trolls' runecraft have been found as far south as Virginia and as far west as the Ohio River Valley. I suspect that, no longer bound by their duty, they followed the call of their blood and explored the mysterious but beautiful continent.

Another great but practically unknown explorer was Madoc ap Gwynedd of Cymru. Rather than war with his brothers for the principdom of his land, he sailed with his followers into the western ocean, inspired by tales of a distant but bountiful country beyond the sea. Of course, there were many changelings among his crew, for this was an adventure not to be missed. They eventually landed in what is now Mobile Bay. Their trek took them to the Appalachian Mountains, where they built a fort and settled. Their relations with their neighbors, while not warm, were peaceful, and Madoc journeyed to his old home for supplies and more settlers. Soon the Welsh colony was thriving in the green-mantled mountains of their new land. In time, no doubt, the Welsh and native tribes would have merged and multiplied in the usual way of things. But it was not to be.

The tales differ on who discovered the treasure. Some say a childling happened upon the stone; others contend it was Dyfnwal ap Gwydion, lord of Caer Madoc. Many others say it was Madoc himself who awoke from strange dreams, the first night of his encampment on the wooded ridge; digging under his bedroll, he uncovered a strange and beautiful gemstone. This wondrous rock was called the Dreamstone. Regardless of the finder, it eventually came into the hands of a sidhe of House Eiluned, who realized the potential of the stone. In a mighty ritual, he opened a trod across the ocean, allowing other nobles and their followers to journey to the new land. Even as the gate was forming, the Nunnehi noticed, and they weren't happy about it. They demanded the trod be closed and the stone be returned to them, though I would think that if they knew it was there in the first place they wouldn't have left it for the sidhe to pick up. But nonetheless, war came to Madoc's mountain, as Nunnehi fought Kithain, drawing the mortals of both sides into the fray. Though they fought bravely, the Welsh settlers were driven from their home. They attempted to build new settlements, but were attacked by the local tribes each time. I don't know what finally became of them, but I've heard tales of a tribe of Indians with blue eyes and some Welsh-like words in their language.

No, I'm not surprised you haven't heard about Madoc's trek. You'll find the tale in a few places, but most mortal historians dismiss it. Not Madoc's fault; he just didn't have the PR machine Columbus did, I guess.

As for the Welsh fae, they held the trod's gate until reinforcements came. The Nunnehi seemed willing to face destruction rather than give up, and it may have come to that had the Dreamstone not vanished. A truce, such that it was, was called shortly thereafter. The trod remained open, but only a few fae crossed to the western lands. For their part, the Nunnehi aggression slackened, though they were never so friendly to the newcomers after that point. The Dream path held until the 14th century. When trods began to fail, the sidhe and most of the commoners took the faltering route back across the water, trying to reach the fading Arcadian gates. A handful of commoners stayed in the Summerlands, for they had formed ties with the local Nunnehi — it has been known to happen, you know.

The Shattering Begins

He looked... at the gathering gloom in the east... and hope seemed to whither... almost beyond hearing he thought he caught... a cry: faint, but heart-quelling, cruel and cold.

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*

War of the Courts

Since the Sundering's beginning, the world's connection with the Dreaming had been slowly wavering. Then, the world changed for the worse. The details are maddeningly obscure, but here's what we — my fellow historians and I — managed to piece together. As Banality grew stronger, the fae grew weaker. The cycles of our lives were gradually but inexorably spinning into new courses, and some among the Unseelie Court were determined to do something to draw the Dreaming back to them. They believed that by plunging the world into chaos, Banality could be lessened and mortals would be more tractable. After all, they're more likely to believe in dragons if they see one of the critters flatten their house. These dark fae refused to allow the Seelie their ascendance during the light half of the year. And then the mad struggle began. Shocked by this unheard-of breach in tradition, many fae fell into their own Unseelie natures. The Accordance War was a skirmish by comparison, for the fae of that age, weakened though they were, had might we couldn't dream of at their disposal. Bitter winds and cold rains the dark ones brought to bear against a cowering world; dragons and drakes and great wyrms were wakened from centuries-long slumber to once more make the earth wither beneath the shadow of their wings.

The Shattering

- 1215 — War of the Courts begins
- 1347 — The Black Plague reaches Europe
- 1348 — The Shattering Begins
- 1349 — Silver's Gate collapses, sealing the last route to Arcadia
- 1353 — The signing of the Compact ends the War of the Courts

In the early years of the thirteenth century, the winters grew long and cold, and the rains fell with monsoon-like duration. Crops drowned in the fields, roads were reduced to a muddy morass and famine and cold did their part to fill the graveyards. In later centuries, people called it the Little Ice Age. In modern fashion, they blamed the weather on sunspots rather than sorcery; warfare's destruction was pegged on Mongols or squabbles between local kings instead of the Shining Host and the nightmares made real. Killing the dreamers was madness; starving and hopeless peasants cannot dream, and an artist in a hungry land cannot find patronage. Worse, in the turmoil and suffering the masses looked to the Church, whose enmity with our kind was growing even then. And still the battles raged. The cold persisted for nearly two hundred years. But it would get far worse before it got better.

The Black Death

Mortal histories link the wretched conditions to the susceptibility of Europe to its next invader: the Black Death. Plague blazed across the continent, from the Black Sea to Ireland, in less than four years. Millions died in agony. Cities were emptied, villages vanished, and, to paraphrase Mr. Poe, Darkness and Decay and the Black Death held illimitable dominion over all. In one hundred years of disease and famine, the mortal population of Europe had been cut in half. Where once there was hope, now there was fear. All art, all dreams, revolved around the dance with Death. Glamour was tainted, fit only for dark creations. And in this age of fear, what little remained of hope was with the Church, whose Inquisition was becoming a dire threat to all the supernatural beings in the land. Few mortals remembered or practiced the old ways which fed the power of the fae. The death of millions, the power of the Church, the loss of belief — all this proved to be too much. With a terrible scream, the tenuous ties which bound the Dreaming to this world snapped.

The Shattered Dream

Yes, when trods began to collapse, when Balefires flickered and went out, when cloud castles melted away like mist, the sidhe bolted and ran. Not all at once, of course; at first only a trickle crossed the Dreaming to the fae realms. But as the Dream paths grew fewer, longer and more treacherous, the stream swelled to a flood. I have only few memories of the early times, and perhaps that's for the best. One which has stayed with me through the lifetimes is of knights of House Gwydion holding back a desperate mob of common kith while a lord traveled a trod with his courtiers, his prize horses, falcons, and hunting dogs, cart after cart loaded with various treasures and mundane souvenirs and finally his cattle. The knights withdrew through the gate just as it collapsed.

Thinking about that sidhe retreat, I'm reminded of the fall of Saigon. Naturally, the sidhe who speak at all of their flight will rationalize away their betrayal. But it happened all the same.

There were exceptions; there always are. House Scathach, for whom retreat is an alien concept, stayed to take their chances on Earth. Also, according to a chronicler of the House,

Fiona herself, surrounded by a small retinue, refused to leave the mortals and commoners she held so dear. There are a few, a very few, other exceptions. Two or three Gwydion put their money where their mouths were and stayed to defend their flocks. As Master Weyland tells it, more than a few of House Dougal refused to leave their workshops; good metalwork was always in fashion. Given their love for mortals, and their low status among the sidhe, I wouldn't be surprised if many of House Liam stayed behind. But I'll bet you no Eiluned waited around for the last gate to fall.

I must say that, for whatever reason they stayed, the sidhe had a difficult time of it. Afraid and hemmed in by Banality, many commoners chose these brave souls as scapegoats, killing not a few of their number. A few of the remaining sidhe wrapped a cloak of Glamour around them so tightly that neither Banality nor reality could find its way in. Others followed our lead and forsook their gossamer tresses and fair flesh for the crude clay of mortal bodies. And then there were those who, out of pride or penitence, sought no sanctuary and were eventually crushed by the new age.

Not all commoners hated to see the nobles depart. Like children with their parents out of the house, they began to claim their depopulated kingdoms, styling themselves King This or Lord That. Some did this out of sense of duty, but many did it out of greed.

Though each kith had its own heroes, the trolls were probably the greatest of all. Though many had the opportunity, almost none returned to Arcadia. In the days after the closing of the gates, the trolls took the mantle of leadership, organizing motleys, gathering and rationing what Glamorous resources remained. They proved themselves the true nobility, and we haven't forgotten. Which would you rather have, a leader who will die to defend you, or one who scampers off when things get rough?

Still, it was a hard time. The Inquisition swept across the land, hunting for fae and Prodigal alike. Motleys were broken as some Kithain fell and others fled. For the most part, we were on our own. Without a motley's support, far too many fae Forgot themselves.

From a 15th century writing by Kalliope, satyr wilder:

In Samhain dreams I can remember the darkest times. Unlike many of my kind, I did not take the guise of mortals, for I thought it deceptive and wrong; I was nothing if not true to myself. I dwelt in the forested lands where the Cross had not yet purged belief in the old ways. There were those among the Wyck who were convinced that mage and fae belonged to the Mythic Age and that we had overstayed our welcome. Gradually, I began to believe that too. Forgetting came soon after. Times are hard, but I wouldn't want to go back to the days after the Shattering.

Granted, we weren't completely friendless. The Fianna showed themselves as good as their oath. Though they had their own troubles, they hid us and helped us. The Ard Righ of the Fianna welcomed many refugees inside the seven walls of Tara, though we had nothing to offer in return. Always remember, then, that these Prodigals stood up for us in our hour of greatest need.

The descendants of the Wyck, the Verbena, were even higher on the Inquisition hit list. Though there was little we could do for them as our power dwindled, we helped where we could, and they did likewise.

It may surprise you greatly, but there were a few of the Walking Dead among our allies. Very few, mind you, but some of these ancients had ties with the Kithain. Powerful allies, those vampires. Of course, for every one that hid us, a dozen would readily betray us to the Church or take our blood for their own uses.

Unfortunately, some of our allies felt the Shattering like a mortal blow. The Inanimae, our fae cousins who were bound to their places of power, all fell into slumber. And many of the creatures of dream and nightmare lost all of the power they once enjoyed over mortals. Once proud, helpful or frightening, the chimera were left to wander the world unnoticed by those around them. Many just faded away.

The Compact

It seems odd to me that, in the midst of their struggle just to survive, the Courts would still make war. Pure madness. There were some among both camps that saw the Shattering's shakeup of fae society as a chance to render the old systems void. The Unseelie Court (which was large, as befitted the shadows which crept over our spirits) believed, despite evidence to the contrary, that chaos and darkness was the only path to bringing back the Dreaming. The Seelie Court, not without reason, argued that by violating the old ways the Unseelie had brought about the Shattering. At a time when changelings were desperately trying to hide from the Inquisition, the Unseelie were wreaking havoc among mortals, making them turn to our persecutors for help. Why did this happen? Fear and desperation will make you do crazy things. Some of the rabble-rousers among us suggest that the squabble was the work of some of the remaining sidhe, although I don't really believe it. Not really.

Cooler heads would have prevailed, sure, but it likely would have been too late to save the Kithain. Luckily, our Prodigal allies stepped in. The Fianna had succored the Kithain for many years, and their always fragile patience was wearing thin, especially now that some of their Kinfolk were being swept away by whirlwinds or dying in cantrip-induced duels or battles. After a changeling prank led the forces of the Inquisition to a werewolf pack, the Ard Righ of the Fianna, Gionna of the Broken Spear, demanded in no uncertain terms that the two sides meet at Tara to work things out. Otherwise, the fae would no longer be granted hospitality in Tara, nor any hall or hold belonging to the Fianna. This was a potent enough threat in those days, when freeholds were even scarcer than they are today.

And so they came: the slithering sluagh, hulking ogres, steel-jawed redcaps, boggarts and goblins of every description; noble giants and earthy boggans, passionate satyrs and mysterious eshu; kith since lost and forgotten; and representatives of both Courts gathered at Tara. For three days and nights, the Kithain discussed, argued, ranted and raved, but no agreement was reached. Several Kithain argued for a contest to settle once and for all which Court would rule, while a few voices called for a resumption of the age-old ways of splitting the year.

To this day, no one knows who said it. A trick of the Dreaming has withheld the memory from us. But in the moments before dawn, someone arose to speak before the council. He (or she) spoke with a conviction stronger than the staunchest troll, with passion no satyr could match, yet with reason irrefutable. What he told the assembly, in short, was this: our very essence houses both the Seelie and Unseelie, and to deny either would be to deny ourselves — the road to Forgetting. To fight each other for what we are is dangerous, for if we win the fight against ourselves, do we not also lose? In a voice laden with prophesy, he warned that should the war continue beyond the following sunset, the fae were doomed to fade from the Earth forever.

The lone voice convinced even the hardest heart among the changelings. It's said that Thomas of Boothby, a boggan of great repute, drafted the Compact which declared a cessation of hostilities between the Courts for as long as both Courts felt it necessary (in modern terms, "for the duration"). All among the gathering signed the document. As the sun set, the mysterious speaker, suddenly enveloped in a nimbus of powerful Glamour rolled up the document and, in a burst of Glamour, vanished into the Dreaming. At that moment, all changelings around the world learned of the truce. It's a truce that, after a fashion, continues to this day.

The Interregnum

As years turned to decades, then to centuries, the changelings adapted to their cruel world. Those that were able, huddled around the rare Balefires, while others made their way as best they could. Some kith fared better than others; nockers did especially well as the paradigm of science began to wrest control from the Church, but each kith found and filled its own niche, even as we do to this day. At first, the commoners remained in their familiar baronial system, but as the merchant class became ascendant, commoner associations began to reflect that change. Leaders were styled as mayors, aldermen or generals, and the courts became assemblies. In many cases, changelings dispensed with leadership roles altogether, living in a completely egalitarian motley.

The Renaissance

About the time the plagues died down came the rediscovery of old knowledge and the discovery of new learning called the Renaissance. The word actually means "rebirth," a most apt description. In the span of two or so centuries, artists made greater strides than they had in all of the previous millennium. Think of

On the Interregnum

The problem with the sidhe is that they're too removed from us. They can't possibly understand what we went through. Even the Fiona, who style themselves "the people's sidhe," don't really want to hear about the Interregnum. If only they could walk for a while in common shoes, maybe they'd learn a little humility. Or humanity.

— Sohrab, Eshu Wilder

I've heard the sidhe tell stories of glorious battles and epic quests, of hardships endured for love and honor. Those tales don't impress me and can never move me like the stories of the Interregnum. If you think things are Winter-cold now, can you imagine what it was like when the Black Death stalked the earth? When children lived and died in factories that coated the verdant valleys with soot? How DARE they speak to us of nobility, the whiny hothouse flowers? True nobility died on the rack, suffering to the end rather than betraying the motley. It died in the plague houses, comforting a child until the last light faded from her eyes. It died in Forgetfulness in a Banal school, trying to find and fan one spark of creativity amid all the rote work.

The sidhe fight and quest because they enjoy it. We suffered because we had no other choice. I despise the lot of them.

— Barath Avery, eshu grump

it! What wonder it must have been to see the works of DaVinci, Michaelangelo and Spencer pouring new Glamour into the world! What must the English have thought the first time they witnessed a play of Marlowe or the Bard? The great thinkers of past eras were recovered. Distant lands were (re)discovered, and there's nothing like an explorer to fire the imagination. Yet the world of the common man had myth as well. Just because no one in his village had seen a mantichore didn't mean they don't exist, merely that the local saint had banished them from his valley a few centuries ago. When the Orient and the New World (thought to be the same place) were discovered, active imaginations and tall tales peopled the new lands with any number of improbable beings, including one-legged folk or giants with their legs on backwards. And even a churchgoing woman might leave out a libation for the "Good People." Perhaps, we thought, there was a kind of magic left in humanity, after all.

Of course, it wouldn't do to forget the nearly constant warfare and upheavals of the period. Dynastic squabbles, religious strife — and the Inquisition and its children were still around. Still, I sometimes think about what the sidhe missed because they ran a few decades too soon.

The Early Interregnum

15th – 17th centuries — The Renaissance

17th – 18th centuries — The Age of Reason and Enlightenment

1776 — Declaration of Independence signed

1789 — French Revolution begins

Flight to the New World

In the face of persecution and disbelief, it's no wonder that many changelings once again plied the waves as the fae had done before the Shattering, looking for the fabled Summerlands. Don't forget the enormous power of discovery, my dear. This time, the incipient colonies were strong enough to stand against the often hostile native peoples. The wiser of the fae again tried to make peace with the Nunnehi and were initially successful. Again, peace depended on both sides; brash young braves, angry changelings or even a boundary crossed accidentally could provoke hostility. Many Kithain learned, to their regret, who was here first.

Still, changelings had the strength of numbers on their side. As native tribes were pushed off their lands or fell victim to European diseases, the Nunnehi grew weaker. Many followed their mortal kin to the west or to oblivion, while others faded into the hills. I'm not saying this was right, mind you, but it is what happened. There's little we can do about it now except spread the truth and see that it doesn't happen again. Conquering others for resources and territory is, alas, a part of both human and fae nature.

The Age of Enlightenment and Reason

I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore... whilst the great ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered before me.

— Sir Isaac Newton

The Enlightenment was like a thorny rose for the Kithain, beautiful yet painfully sharp. Masterpieces of music and art drew us to patrons' courts in droves. A certain love of chivalry and gallantry reappeared with the likes of musketeers and pirates. Great discoveries in science and exploration fired imaginations and inspired dreams of a better world, especially among the nockers. Yet many of these new dreams had no place for the fae. We were relegated to "fairy tale nonsense." Mortals wanted to believe in things they could see, touch and smell, not a bunch of pagan myths.

Still, we could not be so easily banished. In our mortal forms we were explorers, soldiers, tutors and even courtiers and politicians. We sat in the salons with men of letters arguing philosophy. As occasionally happens when philosophy is discussed, people actually started thinking. Many commoners feared the sidhe would never return; others began to hope they wouldn't. These visionaries had listened to the



new dreams of humanity that were taking shape around bizarre ideas like equality, liberty and fraternity — which leads to our next big leap.

The Spirit of Independence

Kings are the servants, not the proprietors of the people.

— Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*

From the Age of Reason sprang the Age of Independence. In a world of privilege, people began to speak of basic rights. The old notion of the divine right of kings was fading quickly for both human and fae. Well, it wasn't like there were any sidhe monarchs around, right? In the American colonies, the populace started chafing at what they saw as oppressive rule. The British responded, in typical fashion, by becoming more oppressive. In some aspects, it mirrors the less successful revolution two hundred years later, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

As I was saying, in the fertile ground of colonial America, ideas took root. Read all the pamphlets of the time, like *Common Sense*, *Rights of British America* and the rest. They probably seem tame and obvious now, but back then they were beyond radical. What about Jefferson's words in the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Believe me, for most mortals that wasn't exactly self-evident. These dreams were immense. They had to be, for how else could the people have the courage to cast aside their ties to one of the most powerful nations on earth? Indeed, to claim that nation as an enemy? And how in a world of monarchies could a nation be governed by common people?

From that day in 1776 when the document was signed even to the present, commoners made pilgrimages to Philadelphia to see Liberty Hall; it's an important shrine for us and one of the reasons the Legion of Liberty fought so desperately, less than 200 years later.

Of course, the United States was rather exceptional; the American people were more or less used to fending for themselves when they cut the apron strings. When you realize how they succeeded against such odds at Jamestown and Plymouth Colony, you get some idea of how they earned and learned independence. While the transition to an independent nation was rocky, the government managed to hold itself together. More or less the same thing happened with the commoners; while practicing enlightened self-rule was much more difficult than following the local troll overlord (and mind you, many

Changeling Politics in Early America

Democracy...has been no better guarantee against war than the old dynastic rule of kings.

— Jan Smuts

In the early days of the colonies, we had little contact with each other. Lucky Kithain would have one or two friends to keep them from Forgetting their true selves. They had to be very careful in those days, for religious intolerance and xenophobia were rampant, and the Burning Times were not entirely past. As more Kithain arrived in the New World, groups became larger, and kith politics became more important. As usual, a motley's organization mirrored the mortals around them. Thus, democracy was the rule rather than the exception. There were, of course, some who were "Mayor for Life," but strictly feudal territories were quite unusual in the New World. Occasionally, charismatic personalities would rise to dominate the political landscape of states or even regions, creating a new state unified under one banner. Such entities did become de facto kingdoms. The kingdom might keep things stirred up or bring order, depending on the leader. Generally, the kingdom seldom outlived its creator.

As the changelings' situation in America stabilized, we began to strengthen our connections with one another. The leader of Marthasville might have some news the motleys of Savannah would want to hear, or perhaps a changeling in Chicago might turn to a motley in Peoria for refuge during a crisis. Over time this very loose association became known as the Confederation of the Turtle. While I don't know for sure, I believe the name came from the Nunnehi, who at times were our allies. Unfortunately, the Confederation was no more effective than the ones the mortals scrapped in the 1780's, and internecine struggles were too frequent to allow us to come together permanently.

One common theme you'll find in any culture at any era is the idea of "Us" versus "Them." In a fight or an argument, I would support my brother over my cousin, my cousin over my clan, my clan over my village and my village over the village across the valley. In the dark times when all Kithain were "Us" against the Banal mortal "Them," we acted in accord, and this cooperation saw us through. But when resources were short and we had room to breath, "Us" meant one kith. The redcaps would kick the boggans aside for a freehold while the sluagh would use the situation to further their own goals. Sometimes this struggle would flare up into full-blown warfare, either as kith against kith or territory against territory. More often than not, we've been divided through our long history, and it was part of what lost us the War.

— Justin Hejaz, eshu grump

a fine troll ruled back in those days), the rewards of freedom were cherished. When the French people revolted, though, the ideals were soon corrupted. The dreams turned sour, and the republic consumed itself with violence. Other countries had similar problems as they struggled with the rights and responsibilities of democracy. Many roots of the Five Years War were sown at this time.

The Industrial Revolution

Industry's explosion in the late 18th through the 20th century was a blight on the world. At first glance, one might think it wasn't such a bad thing. Jobs were plentiful, and cheap goods such as clothing and books were becoming readily available. For the first time, people had access to public libraries. Free public education was a long way off in the late 1700s, but talk of common schools was popular.

Of course, one of the flaws of most high school history classes is that they tend to compartmentalize aspects of history. "Today we learn about the great explorers; next week, great artists." History just doesn't work like that. Nothing happens in a vacuum, and I think history's far more interesting when you understand that one simple fact. The age of industry held both good and bad for us.

The Revolution had its beginning in the Enlightenment. It goes without saying that the nockers were pleased as punch, at least in the beginning. The gadgets, tools, contraptions and innovations excited them to no end. Trains were the marvel of the age! Why, people thought they would die if they went faster than 25 miles per hour! And what about microscopes and telescopes, Watt's steam engine, the cotton gin and steamships. Listening to the nockers go on, you'd think Newton was a god on earth.

But you can have too much of a good thing. When all those innovations were applied, things went wrong. Factories sprang up, belching smoke and soot. Forests were cut down to feed the factories. The poor were given the choice to work 16 hours or starve, and young hands could work alongside old ones. Pollution, long hours, wageslave conditions, children without childhoods, we've all heard about it, and some of us remember it well. The ranks of Kithain diminished alarmingly during this period, for so many of our kind were unlucky enough to be born in the industrial hells or in the stifling bureaucracies of new business and were never inspired enough to reach their Chrysalis. Even the nockers started taking a second look at things. Well, some of them.

The Ages of Industry and Romance

Late 18th – 19th centuries — Industrial Revolution begins
1861 — American Civil War begins
1865 — American Civil War ends
19th — early 20th centuries — The Age of Romance
1912 — Titanic sinks

Tragically, and I'm loathe to admit it, but some among our kind were among the oppressors. I don't mean Dauntain either, although quite a few of those cold ones were foremen and chairmen. Sad as it is, there have always been tyrants among our lot, and the industrial world brought them out in force. Money and power were their ambitions, and no one could get close enough to stop them. And while no kith went underrepresented, the ones that spring to mind are the nockers. A lot of them were rich as Rockefellers and had the time of their lives making new gadgets and not worrying about how they were produced. Ah, well, it's the way they are, so we shouldn't blame them too much. Oh, hell, blame them if you want.

The Age of Romance

In the dreariness of the Industrial Revolution, there was a spark of hope. We didn't just sit down in the grime and waste away; we tried to change things where we could. The accumulation of our efforts became a movement, which helped spawn a new age: the Age of Romance.

The Romantic Movement was a backlash against both the Banality of the modern world and the stilted conformity and rationality of the previous Age. Where music was once structured, it became flowing, bright, wildly passionate or darkly brooding. Poetry and art likewise became evocative. Themes of love and heroism took on new life. Just look at the works of Shelley, Scott and Whitman.

Unfortunately, it was the middle and upper classes who benefited from the change. Rights for the poor were practically nonexistent; in fact, anything resembling a worker's union was outlawed by the English Parliament. Still, it was something. The middle class began to read novels, attend plays and listen to music; in our situation, patronage of the arts is certainly something to be thankful for. And the situation of children had changed for the better. Before the mid-1800's, children weren't exactly doted on; there was no point to it, since child mortality was so high. Instead, they were treated as miniature adults. As the standards of living improved — for those with money, anyway — children were more likely to grow up. Partly for that reason, and partly because of the shifting ideals of the time, children were loved and nurtured like little flowers, as certain writers put it.

The War Between the States

As American industrialism progressed, there was a gradual shift of Kithain to the agrarian Old South, where customs hinting of the familiar European styles still existed, especially among the landed upper class. That's not to say there were no Kithain among the northerners, not at all. There were quite enough to make things interesting when the next revolution came. I guess if you wanted to generalize, you could say the changelings in the southern lands were conservative idealists while those of the north were moderates looking towards the future.

I was there, sure enough, though my memories are vague and scattered as a fading dream. There were those of us who took up arms against distant rule, the same as our



grandfathers and great-grandfathers. And there were others who fought against us, believing that to dissolve the union would shatter the dream first given shape some eighty years previously. Who's to say which side was right and wrong on that count?

And yes, we fought, albeit with swords more than guns. There were battles you'll find in no mortal history book. Many on both sides fell to Forgetfulness, or worse. And what did we get out of it? A far worse oppression. More than a few changelings lost themselves to Banality; some were undone entirely. While the years just after the war were wretched down south, don't forget that the changelings in the Northern states had their own problems. Industrialism was at its height and brought far more bad than good.

Westward Ho!

Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.

— John Louis O'Sullivan

Since the first colonists arrived, the settlers had always been looking towards the sunset, yearning to see what was over the next ridge or through the next valley. As the population expanded, brave pioneers set out westward, trying to get ahead of the rest. I've heard that when old Daniel Boone would see chimney smoke or hear a neighbor's dog barking, he'd up and move his entire clan a few valleys over so he wouldn't feel so crowded. In a time of prosperity following the War of 1812, Americans looked westward and decided that God had given them the right to rule the continent from sea to shining sea. So they struck out by the thousands and tens of thousands, seeking their fortunes. Braving wild animals, hostile Indians and hard country, these people worked and fought to tame the land, or just to find some place where no one could tell them what to do. People were hungry for a place to call their own. During the gold rushes, they dreamed of fast wealth and were willing to kill for it. When enough folks moved into a place, it ceased being wild, for people brought with them stores, newspapers, law and trains. That's when a new class of adventurous hero emerged: the gunslinger, the duelist of the day. Nerves of steel and catlike reflexes began the legend, which writers back east expanded to almost epic hyperbole. Just like Robin Hood, criminals such as Jesse James became fabled heroes, though they seldom deserved the acclaim.

Of course, you could easily look at the other side of the coin. Our expansion was at the expense of the people who were there before us. Certainly, our distant kin, the Nunnehi, had every right to fight against the Kithain, and they continue the struggle today. But as a historian, you learn that history is about conquest. If someone gets land, someone else has to lose it. The only difference now is that we've developed a sense of guilt. I mean, nearly every culture has conquered or been conquered at some point. Even the Tuatha de Danann were overcome by the Milesians. So, while I'm sad the Nunnehi and their tribes were given a raw deal, I'm not taking the next trod back to Europe.

Turn of the Century

Late in the Age of Romance, art and literature looked for inspiration in the fables of legendary times — this was our heyday. Arthur, Camelot, El Cid, the Celtic Revival — all these were fair game for the artists and writers of the era. Mansions of magnificent opulence — bought with the hard work of the wretched poor, of course — sprang up in the getaways of the wealthy. Once again, it was an era of bright promise. The Wright brothers (no, they weren't nockers, but the nockers claim them as Kinain) built the first working flying machine. Outlandish inventions such as electric lighting, radios and the telephone were bringing the world into the future. I believe this was the first inkling we had of being one connected world. People thought they were entering a glorious, opulent new age, one where they would rise above the whims of nature and the suffering of past eras. Some say the Titanic disaster was what comes of thumbing your nose at fate. Yet as horrible as that was, a much worse tragedy would befall the world, just a few years later.

The Great War

*You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.*

— Siegfried Sassoon, "Suicide in the Trenches"

Trouble again reared its ugly head as territorial disputes and expansionist greed turned into a shooting war, one that snowballed into a conflict of truly epic proportions. We call it the First World War, which is ironic since back then it was called the War to End All Wars.

When America entered the war, duty, honor and glory were the watchwords. We were going to help our English cousins, ride in like the cavalry and show how brave the sons of America could be. And yes, you can bet that few Kithain could ignore the siren call of glory.

Let me tell you, the War to End All Wars was among the most Banal conflict ever fought. It was a meatgrinder designed to kill the spirit as well as the body. Soldiers were drowning in mud, huddling in caves and trenches, covered in vermin. Once when we fought, we could look into the enemy's eyes as our blades clashed. Since then, humanity had invented ways to impersonalize killing. Machine guns covered the field with a hailstorm of bullets for which courage and valor were no defense. Artillery churned the mud and collapsed bunker and trench, burying men in tons of earth; flamethrowers seared flesh. Barbed wire grabbed and held its victim steady so the

The Great War

1914 — World War I begins

1917 — United States enters the fray

1918 — Armistice signed; World War I ends

Fire in the Sky

If there was anything remotely resembling glory or Glamour, it would be found in the sky. Knights of the air, they were called, their horses built of canvas and wood, their lances spitting machine guns. The fact that most of these sky warriors met their deaths in a matter of days or weeks only gained greater glory for the survivors. How many children of the age imagined flying at Richenbacher's wing? Or lining up Voss or Richthofen in their sights? The dashing aviator, a figure of romance in his leather jacket with a silk scarf whipping in the wind, was this age's answer to the gunslinger, the swashbuckling pirate, the knight errant.

We had a few Kithain dogfighters on both sides; they even had a couple all-Kithain fighter groups. One of the best pilots, a nocker named McGarth, racked up an impressive 15 confirmed kills. One time he got caught by a patrol of Fokkers and had his Sopwith shot almost to kindling. So the story goes, he nursed his craft in, cursing and screaming at it to keep it running. As he was walking away, the engine fell out and the top wing collapsed.

— Garrett Grady, boggan grump

enemy could take aim; worst of all was the damned poison gas, which blistered the throat and filled lungs with fluid. To top it off, communications were poor, and ignorance and stupidity reigned. Men charged into withering fire because that was how war was conducted when Napoleon conquered Europe a century before. Squads disappeared into the churned up mire because the generals didn't know any better. No, in this war, honor and glory had no place. Far too many of the Kithain perished. Many more forgot themselves in No Man's Land.

And what came of the war? Some saw it as a hopeful time where all war was to be rendered obsolete (as well it should, for most thought it too horrible a prospect to repeat). Others saw the world more darkly and either fell into despair or into a wild kind of carpe diem; after all, if life is meaningless, you may as well have a good time! It was the mix of these two views that led to the Roaring Twenties.

The Roaring Twenties

The Twenties were an interesting tumult. Prohibition caused more problems than it solved, far as I can tell. Clever people could get around the liquor restrictions; unlucky people went blind drinking bathtub concoctions and organized crime got a lift by bootlegging. A new mythology rose up around the gangsters and the "G-men" who fought them. And yes, Kithain were on both sides. It was pretty ugly, and people took terrible chances with their lives, but like I said, the mood of the time was "seize the day." Once again, just like in the West, you had tales of Robin Hoods robbing banks, giving money to the poor or just keeping it themselves to have a good time.

Between the Wars

- 1920 — Prohibition begins
- 1929 — Wall Street crashes; beginning of Great Depression
- 1933 — Prohibition ends

Believe it or not, there were a number of freeholds established in these wild years. The speakeasy, where a guy or gal could get a good drink, dance and maybe find romance, was a popular spot. A few remain open even today, and in some, the mood of carefree optimism remains abundant.

Depression

Most satyrs contend that banning alcohol led directly to the Depression. Without liquor to keep people occupied, they started throwing their money into the market. Ah, well, it sounds good, anyway.

To be perfectly honest, the Great Depression wasn't as bad for us as you might think. Sure, people's lives took a turn for the worse, and many mortals despaired of ever finding work. But they seemed to hang on to dreams all the more tightly. Hollywood offered escape, and you can bet we were there. Pulp fiction, radio and movies had a profound influence on the dreams of mortals. If you doubt me, ask an old grump about the chimerical nightmare the Kithain had to deal with during Orson Welles' radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds*. The mass hysteria resulting from that Samhain broadcast induced months of attacks by chimerical tripods and tentacled Martians. These things would have been amusing were they less dangerous.

World War II

While not as numbingly Banal as the Great War, this terrible conflict nonetheless cost everyone dearly. In the Confederation of the Turtle, duty called once again, and the wilders joined up, despite the awful stories the grumps told about the last war. For the most part, though, the Kithain didn't get directly involved in the war.

In Europe, it was a different story. Many of the German and Austrian Kithain joined the fray, far more out of loyalty to the homeland than to the wretched ruling regime. Quite a few nockers were ensconced in secret labs inventing new and more interesting ways of bringing the enemy (whoever that may be; the nockers seldom cared) to its knees; most of these were Unseelie, of course. Other nockers were opposed to the

The 1940s and 1950s

- 1939 — World War II begins
- 1941 — Pearl Harbor bombed; United States enters World War II
- 1945 — World War II ends; Cold War begins
- 1950-54 — McCarthy era



war because a few Kithain and many Kinain were ending up in concentration camps. We probably can't imagine the horror; it is too painful. In occupied countries, reactions were largely against the fascists. The satyrs were mostly against Hitler and Mussolini, and the sluagh made fantastic resistance fighters. Eshu carried messages all over the Middle East, where there was a war of espionage going on. Trolls were divided, depending on where their strongest loyalties lay. As the war progressed, the Banality of the fascists became apparent to all. For everyone, though, the war was a losing situation. Much of the ruin included treasured architecture and artwork that was lost because of the merciless bombing — and I do mean in all the lands war touched.

The Fifties

You hear about constitutional rights, free speech, and the free press...You never hear a real American talk like that.

— Frank Hague

After the war, people settled down and went on with their lives. The new dream was the American Dream: success as defined by a nice house, a big car, a good job, a family and a dog. It was not a great dream, as dreams go. Suburbs became crowded, and

one yard pretty much looked like the next. But where there are dreams, there is hope and aspiration, and there we are, too.

The world's highest summit was conquered, and a mortal banner flapped in the thin, cold, and hostile air. Many colonial nations gained independence. The first human-crafted satellites orbited the globe, and pilots soared faster than sound, firing the imagination of a generation of would-be astronauts. These years were full of remarkable discoveries and inventions, much like the Renaissance or the Age of Industry.

Of course, there were dark times during this golden age. McCarthy and the red scare hurt the Kithain pretty bad; the madness destroyed many a mortal career, sending a few into Bedlam. And Kinain fell by the score, sent to jail or blacklisted. Probably the greatest blow to us was the stifling of creativity among writers and filmmakers; many were fined or imprisoned, and others suffered under censorship. I laugh at people who say such things could never happen in Concordia. They did once, and I fear they could all too easily happen again.

Let it suffice it to say, the country pulled out of its nosedive, but as far as I'm concerned, it wasn't that interesting a decade. There was, overall, more Banality than Glamour in the end. So let's move on, shall we?

The 60's

1963 — President Kennedy assassinated
1968 — Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy assassinated
1969 — Woodstock festival
July 21, 1969 — Apollo 11 lands on the moon; Resurgence begins

The Sixties

The 1960's were one of those nexus points in American history which foment great changes, with an impact that can be felt for generations. The youth of the land, their heads swimming with idealistic notions, raised hand and voice to bring change to the world, to take power back from the old establishment that, in their eyes, had botched up things but good. Populations such as the Native Americans, African Americans and women began speaking out. Their ideals gave the commoners strength and hope aplenty.

The civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, the polluted, degraded, and just plain toxic environment and the redefining of the principles the country was based on all served to divide young and old, Right and Left, Traditionalist and Iconoclast, North and South. It was a clash of cultures, and it promised a new and better world if we survived the change. It was so difficult — look how many great people died in the struggle. Still, this was a powerful time to be alive.

There were many places — San Francisco, for example, and many college communities — where the music came alive and drugs, sex and meditation were expanding consciousness and lowering Banality. Changelings were drawn like magnets to these places. We inspired dreams wherever we could, through song, speech or hit. Many of us were antiestablishment; after all, governmental stasis and repression hadn't done us much good, had it? It was time to turn back to the people. So we marched, staged sit-ins and raided government buildings.

We had hopes that out of all the turmoil a new society of openness and freedom would be born. The more optimistic of us hoped for a new Spring. We certainly got more than we ever hoped — or feared.

The Resurgence

And so, it begins...

— Kosh, *Babylon 5*

Hindsight's a great thing; sometimes you can see the road best in the rearview mirror. Yeah, something was up, but everybody was so busy with what was going on in the world that they didn't try and puzzle out the portents. The power of the Dreaming showed itself in little ways as the '60s progressed. We were seeing more chimera; Banality was ebbing in some locales and those with the Sight were having strange vibes and confusing visions. In April of '69, one sluagh friend of mine (well, an acquaintance, anyway) told me he had dreamed that men

Rade of the Shining Host

It was just after we watched the moon landing. I went outside and felt the Glamour rising in the air. It was that sort of oppressive excitement you feel when a big storm is on its way.

Then a sound like a thunderclap rent the air, and there they were, a ghostly and majestic procession of tall, slender and utterly beautiful sidhe, riding proud horses with glowing eyes. Their clothes were finer than silk — looked like they'd be spun from colored cobwebs. And you'd have bankrupted the country if you bought all the gold and jewels they wore.

The leader of the procession was the most regal of them all. Her beauty was like the driven snow in sunshine — blinding and cold. I couldn't bear to look at her, to look anywhere except the ground. Compared to her, I was a worm. She never spared me a glance, just rode on. Later in the line, a man did spare me a look, like what you might give an ant that just walked across your sandwich. I really wanted to crawl under a rock.

I've seen sidhe since then in the Dreaming, and let me tell you, those changelings surely are just shadows of the true fae.

— Keefer "Redeye" McDonald, redcap grump

had landed on the moon and found a sword stuck in a boulder. Just as an astronaut reached for the blade, a host of horsemen, cloaked in a blinding light, stampeded over the men. I think he was the only person in America who wasn't watching the TV when the Eagle landed in July.

The air fairly crackled with Glamour, and it seemed like all the Balefires flared briefly. The most aware of us swear they heard a distant rumble, like thunder over the horizon. And the sidhe returned.

How they came varied. Some rode out of the Dreaming in great processions, taking mortal form only after arrival. Some simply woke inside the mortal shells they had chosen. Don't ask me what happened to the humans who owned the bodies — some say those mortal souls are frolicking in Arcadia now, but I'm not apt to completely trust the sidhe. For all I know, the humans were sent out of the world entirely, or maybe they are locked in some corner of that hybrid mind.

Regardless, the sidhe were scattered around and had to hunt for each other. Some Unseelie say they wished they had known the sidhe were coming so they could have hunted them down before they got organized. I think that's probably just hindsight at work; many folks saw the Return as a sign Spring was arriving. And yes, I was just as thrilled and hopeful as the rest...at least at first.

Over the course of weeks, more sidhe started showing up. A handful refused to take mortal form, and they either died or were driven back into the Dreaming. After they discovered each other, they began to make themselves known to us. As I said,



some commoners reacted with joy, some with indifference. But many of us could see storm clouds on the horizon and knew that when the lightning struck, it would leave us changed forever.

The Great Land Rush

Almost immediately, the sidhe began their land rush. In little retinues, they divided up the world into kingdoms, laying their claims to individual areas before going out and taking what they thought was theirs, all without asking the commoners. Some claimed to have “memories” of freeholds and former realms before the great Bug Out. Others didn’t bother with that pretense and just laid claim to the first choice real estate they could get their hands on. And if the freehold’s creator happened to be there, well, the pointy-ears would usually be magnanimous enough to allow the poor sod to swear fealty first.

I guess you can imagine that most of us didn’t much care for the idea of Restoration. The world was a very different place than the sidhe remembered; even our monarchs were little more than figureheads, or at most a “president for life” in those days. Sure, there were some conservative commoner monarchs who ruled with strict feudalism, but populist rule with a council of advisors was more the norm. And even if we did want kings, why would we want the sidhe? They abandoned us, after all, and we managed to survive without them. The sidhe had lost the right to lead us. Divine Right had no place in the modern world. But

they didn’t see it that way; the Shining Host just waltzed in with a thank-you-we’ll-take-it-from-here-and-don’t-forget-to-bow-on-your-way-out attitude. Then they got offended when we said, “No.” They demanded the “return of their rightful property,” and we replied, “No, now sod off.” Then they got really pissy. Only the fact that ownership of a freehold must be given by free will kept the sidhe from evicting the owners or worse. As it was, the sidhe persistence often provoked de facto sieges and even skirmishes in many cities. As things got tense, leaders emerged among the commoners. Some were already the mayors or lords of freeholds or larger territories; others were relative unknowns who found their voice in the heat of the struggle. The spirit of 1776 began to rear its head among the motleys. The analogy between the sidhe and the British was easily made, and pretty soon you had fliers quoting the old patriots.

Most commoners had little interest in things beyond their own holdings. A growing number of leaders had the foresight to see the big picture. These visionaries called for a united commoner front, using the “hang together or hang separately” tack. If they’d been given the time, who knows? Maybe they could have united the commoners. Unfortunately, that job was done for them by the sidhe themselves.

I don’t want you to think we were all for liberty, equality and fraternity. Quite a few commoners sided with the Royalists. They saw it as the natural order of things, or thought they’d get



a piece of the pie in the new age when Glamour started raining down from the sky. Motleys broke up, lovers parted, friendships fell into tatters, all over the Restoration.

Things were bad. But they were about to get a whole lot worse.

The Beltaine Massacre: Night of the Iron Knives

Well, every commoner knows the story of the massacre. Who-knows-how-many Kithain, the first among equals in motleys from coast to coast, met to discuss a peaceful settlement to the growing conflict. Instead, powerful magics and iron blades filled the hall. Those commoners all died forever, their souls burned away. Many of us still can't talk about it without blowing a gasket or breaking down.

I don't know if we'll ever know for sure who ordered the attack. But the sidhe certainly know, and since they haven't given us the bastard's head, I can only assume they approve. And that's reason number one to not trust the whole damn lot of them. Sorry, that's not what you're looking for, is it? Anyway....

Not surprisingly, the nobles lost a lot of their commoner support. The Shining Host didn't seem so noble anymore, and their treachery only cost them more blood in the long run. If only they'd kept their word! I honestly believe that we could have reached a peaceful settlement amenable to all. But now we'll never know.

To their credit, members of House Fiona were openly outraged at the atrocity, and most refused to join the other nobles. A few of them even joined our motleys, and braver knights and truer arrows I've never seen. Most declared themselves Swiss, so to speak, and acted as mediators or messengers between the two sides. Of course, a few fought on the Royalist side. To be fair, though, I saw many a normally fierce Fiona hanging back in a sidhe charge, or clumsily letting fleeing commoners get away.

As we hoped, almost all of House Scathach came to our defense. Up until the Beltaine Massacre, they'd been tight with the returning nobles (not that I understand the attraction; the nobles treated them like dirt), but they recognized the utter barbarity of the ambush. Besides being swordsmen without equal, they made damn good assassins. Their greatest flaw, though, is their limited vocabulary; they've never heard of the phrases "tactical withdrawal" and "strategic retreat." I don't think the other houses have ever forgiven their opposition; for my own part, the black unicorn is welcome in my hold anytime.

News of the massacre spread swept across the land like wildfire; commoner riots erupted everywhere, and some unwary and perhaps undeserving nobles were torn to pieces or pinned with cold iron. The rest quickly banded together and readied for battle.

The Beltaine Gathering

When the sidhe came for our oaths of fealty, we politely but firmly told them to get a life, get a job and get gone. When they started throwing around their damn Sovereign Arts, a couple of burly trolls escorted the fops out of our freehold. Well, their Texas-sized pride wouldn't stand for such treatment, and before long things got tense in the old neighborhood. Then news came of a great conclave where all the commoner leaders would sit down and hash out our problems with Royalists. We voted unanimously that Jerry Andros, the noblest and most eloquent of our small number, should speak for us. Now, some of us were a little worried; after all, we hadn't seen the vaunted honor of the sidhe in use since they showed up. My friend Melyra even crawled out of her favorite air duct to whisper dire portents in Jerry's ear. But he went anyway, saying that any solution was better than fae fighting fae.

Turns out, that wasn't an option. And I never saw him again.

— Alazin, eshu wilder

The Accordance War

So here it is, what you've been waiting all day and night to hear, the history of the War. Before I go on, let me explain what each side had going for it. It'll make what comes afterwards a little clearer.

Advantages

They say it's not what you know, but who you know. Well, the nobles had both. Many Arts had been forgotten before the Industrial Revolution, but the sidhe remembered these as if they'd used them yesterday. They were also experts at battle tactics, as if fighting was all they'd done for the past 600 years. They knew how to travel the trods and how to manipulate the Dreaming to their own advantage. They slipped into newly-awakened freeholds before we even noticed the Glamour.

They also had ancient connections. Pacts made with Inanimae, werewolves, wizards, dragons...seems like those bloody sidhe has sworn alliances or eternal friendships with members of every damn sentient culture they could find. And if half a millennium had made those Prodigals and others forgetful, the sidhe and the Dreaming would be quick to remind them of their ancestor's obligations.

Oh, and as if they weren't satisfied at having a royal flush, the Shining Host had aces up their sleeves, in their pockets and under their hats to boot. I honestly don't know what, if anything, they could bring with them on their return trip. Perhaps they merely recalled the resting places. But when we saw them in hall or field, they bore treasures of legend, unseen since the Shattering: the blade Caliburn, the Crown Eldritch,

Davaric the Thirsting...all these and many more were ready to make a rebel's life difficult.

What did we have going for us? Well, numbers, obviously. The sidhe were outnumbered almost 20-to-1. Even with their commoner allies, we had the superior numbers. Secondly, we knew the lay of the land. The world had changed a lot in 600 years; knowing the new geography was critical to what victories we had during the war. New associations and new thinking would take awhile for the nobles to understand. And most importantly, we had spirit. Whether driven by hate and anger, or by the fires of freedom, we had the power of a cause on our side.

Allies

For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.

—William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

Kinain

Not all of our mortal relatives knew about the fae, but those who did proved invaluable. Some provided safe houses. Others made excellent messengers who, as obvious mortals, could slip unsuspected through blockades. A few even fought with us, and of course there were the few who had knowledge of the forge — ahem. You misunderstand, I can see it in your eyes. Now, I want to make it clear that I would wish a cold iron death on no one...excepting maybe those who committed the Beltaine Massacre. However, giving the enemy something to worry about — I have no problem with that. So, some of our Kinain hand forged caltrops — you know, Roman nails, four points, no matter how it lands on the ground, one point is always up? After we learned how the sidhe loved flank attacks, we would scatter scores of those things around where we needed protection. When we heard the shrieks, we knew the bastards were on the move. Usually, the first few would be out of action, nursing foot wounds. Those who continued the attack would have to tread carefully, so their attention was divided. Necessity is the mother of invention, don't forget.

Inanimae

Few Kithain know that our fae cousins, the Inanimae, still exist, much less took part in the war. There were precious few of them awake at the time, and their help was often subtle. I mean, how do you see a water spirit in a river or an air sifl on the wind? But there were a few, so I'm told, who awakened with the Resurgence, and some chose sides in the war. I have heard tales of motleys aided by men of stone or inspired by warrior-bards with a fiery passion in their song. I can't say I've seen them, though.

Werewolves

Of the Prodigals, only the werewolves had an active part in the war's battles, small though their effort was in the grand scheme of things. There are several tribes of werewolves, some friendly with the Kithain, some not. But the closest to us are the tribe of the Fianna. I can see you've heard of them, and yes, they're some of the best singers and taletellers you could ask for.

And damn good fighters, to boot. There's one group of them that reveres Dana herself!

For centuries, we worked together, hiding each other during the bad times, sharing song and drink (and beds, on occasion) during the good times. It's understandable, then, that the commoners might feel let down when the Fianna as a tribe didn't get involved in the war. I guess I don't really blame them, although I resented the hell out of it at the time. After all, we had shared our blood and our hearths (and occasionally pulled each other's fat out of the fire), and they said they didn't want to get involved in "internal affairs." But what I didn't know at the time was that the sidhe, who seemed to have made pacts with everything under the sun and moon, had forged many oaths of support with the werewolves before the Shattering. And not just with the Fianna; House Gwydion used to be pretty tight with the ruling tribe of werewolves, the Silver Furs or White Fangs, can't remember the exact name, which didn't make things any easier for our lupine allies.

In spite of that, the Fianna did make the difference on a few occasions. Sometimes their loyalty to their neighbors overruled whatever their ancestors said hundreds of years ago. And there's nothing like a pack of nine-foot killing machines for turning a sidhe charge into a noble rout.

Mages

Now, these magicians...well, they were trickier to deal with than the werewolves. It was hard to know where you stood with them. A few genuinely helped us, mostly by healing our wounds or hiding us after a sidhe trouncing. These were usually the ones who call themselves Verbena. Another group of mages, House Hermes, tended to side with the returning sidhe (probably more of that damn compact business). In general, though, I think most mages who even knew about Kithain saw the war as an opportunity to strip freeholds of their Glamour and capture the stray Kithain for sick magical experiments. The rest didn't even know or care what was happening.

Nunnehi

The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

— Ancient maxim

Don't think that the Nunnehi just sat around and waited for us to finish our war before they started pestering us again. No, they fought opportunistically. Some fought on the commoners' side, partly because those individuals were at least on speaking terms with us, and partly because many of the sidhe had treated the natives badly 700 years ago. Others would whack any Kithain that came along. Luckily, we usually had a better idea the places to avoid, so blundering sidhe bore the brunt of the raids. Nunnehi ambushes turned the tide in the Battle of Newfound Gap, and the sidhe learned quickly to be wary in mountains, deep forests or open plains, especially near reservations.

A Frontless War

To dispel any confusion up front, the Accordance War was a civil war, not some scrap in a distant land that folks thought about every now and then. Most Kithain were involved in some way, from the smallest childling to the silver-haired grump. Each freehold was watching out for the enemy and preparing for a scrap, if not actually fighting. Subjugated cities usually had some kind of commoner resistance, and commoner-held cities were always on alert for signs of sidhe. Just because the major skirmishes were taking place a thousand miles away didn't mean there weren't sidhe on the trod just outside your freehold. The larger conflicts that have earned the name "battle" were, comparatively speaking, pretty rare. For every Battle of Buckhead or Manhattan, there were hundreds of ongoing duels, skirmishes and guerrilla actions.

Having said that, I'll focus on the larger conflicts which involved organized units rather than scattered motleys. Such battles were much rarer than the independent strike. A good percentage of the sidhe, maybe even half, and their commoner supporters traveled in great hosts to do battle with the "rebels." Militia units were formed on a city, county, or even statewide basis. One of the most famous of these was the 4th Troll Commons; others include was the doomed 3rd Western Legion of Denver fame, the Blue Ridge Battalion and the infamous Iron Brigade over in the Kingdom of Burning Sands. As the war progressed, survivors of broken units joined others, so that at Second Plains the 1st Ozark Legion contained commoners from the Mississippi delta to Milwaukee.

One more thing about the big units I need to say. For the most part, the multiunit armies only formed when a battle was expected. Once a particular struggle had been concluded, the army dispersed. Standing armies became more common later in the war, as sidhe conquests left many homeless soldiers.

The Opening Move

Shortly after the Massacre, the sidhe realized what their arrogant villainy had cost them. Commoners took to the streets, hunting down every sidhe they could find. Many nobles chose the better part of valor and headed west for San Francisco. There, they gathered around the highest-ranking among them, First Lord of War of House Gwydion, Lord Dafyll. Dafyll was an arrogant prig among arrogant prigs, as far as I'm concerned. He graciously accepted leadership of the sidhe forces and planned the counterstrike. And so, the first concerted move on the board of the Accordance War was made on May 12, 1970.

1970: The Year of Sorrow

May 1 — The Beltaine Massacre

May 10 — Dafyll takes command of sidhe forces in San Francisco

May 12-20 — The Battle of the Bay

June 19 — Seattle and Los Angeles attacked simultaneously

The Battle of the Bay

The battle commenced in Berkeley, where some of the heaviest fighting took place. The local commoners, following a planted rumor that the perpetrators of the Beltaine Massacre had taken refuge on the university campus, massed on the grounds. There they were surrounded by noble forces and told to surrender. They didn't, and a vicious but ultimately one-sided melee ensued. A handful of commoners broke through the sidhe lines and ran off to warn the rest of the bay.

Had the entire commoner population joined into one mass army, would they have won? Possibly. Numbers of that magnitude would have been hard to overcome, even for the sidhe. The commoners' biggest weakness was that few of them had any skill at fighting, and those that did usually practiced in bar brawls or street gangs. Faced against armed and armored foes with tactical precision, they didn't have much of a chance. To make matters worse, motleys chose to defend their own territories rather than fight for the whole Bay. To leave their neighborhoods undefended would allow those sneaky sidhe to occupy their freeholds. As a result, the Bay Area was captured bit by bit. The nominal leader of the Bay changelings, Ranalf Sumner, made his stand at Coit Tower, which was located on a steep and very defensible hill. There they held off the sidhe for several days. Unfortunately, a false retreat lured some of the defenders off the hill, where they were cut to pieces by hidden archers. The tower fell in short order.

Beset by sidhe at the Presidio, Nerrit Skinner, Sumner's successor, surrendered his forces in exchange for a promise of mercy for all who laid down their arms. In general, this was observed. However, fighting continued sporadically for another day, and many of commoners paid dearly for their resistance. Other commoners tried to escape. Those who ran into Chinatown were never seen again. A few managed to slip past the sentries and flee to San Jose or Sacramento. Dafyll allowed the vanquished their freedom in exchange for a number of hostages. The sidhe got most of the freeholds, of course.

One of the final places to fall, not surprisingly, was Alcatraz. The abandoned prison was held by a mixed group of commoners who found other retreats blocked. A combination of aerial assault and subtle cantrip wore down the defenders, though not before sidhe bodies littered the yard. Of thirty defenders, only a dozen were captured alive. Lord Markhill ap Gwydion passed summary judgment on the prisoners; since they liked the prison so much, they could stay there. He had them hidden in solitary confinement, away from curious tourists and away from each other, their food brought to them by soundless, invisible chimera. Markhill's lieutenant, who survived his lord at the battle of Buckhead, neglected to mention the prisoners during exchange negotiations at the close of the war. The survivors were discovered in 1979. Of the dozen, seven were still alive, though in various stages of madness. One cell was empty; a court seer claimed the inmate had fallen so deeply into Bedlam that he had slipped into the Dreaming.

Early Days of the War

JOIN UP! The banner of freedom lies in the mud, trampled by the tyrannical sidhe. The sword has fallen — will you dare to pick it up? Lend your might to avenge those who fell at Beltaine! Lend your strength to preserve your freedom!

Join the 12th Common Infantry! If not now, when?

— Chimerical Flier

Less than a week after the Bay was pacified, Vancouver and Seattle were embattled, and Los Angeles was under siege. The City of Angels resisted capture for months and was still a hotbed of resistance for the rest of the war. The fact that the Shining Host seemed to stop on the coast took us by surprise. I found out much later (after it was too late to take advantage of the information) that the sidhe had brought with them the age-old squabbles between Courts. Once they had taken the major centers of the coast, the bigwigs of both Courts found hidden places in the Sierras and talked and fought for months. I suppose the Seelie Court won out, but it couldn't have been by much. They buried the hatchet in the spring of 1971, seeing us commoners as a more important problem to be squashed, I suppose.

Then, small units of sidhe began leapfrogging from freehold to glen. Dafyll's forces moved far more swiftly than the commoners could have imagined. The chief reason was the trod network, which few commoners knew about and even fewer understood. In nearly every case, the commoners were either killed, captured or left weakened to the point they could make no move against the sidhe.

Though we hadn't figured out the trods, we still managed to spread the news of war through various networks. From across the country, changelings headed west to put down the sidhe army. By car, by plane, by ornithopter or airship, Kithain legions gathered to do battle.

The big battle was in Denver; General Brindel of the 3rd Western Legion took command of the defense of the city. Thousands were on the field to meet the enemy, and a couple thousand more garrisoned Denver's freeholds. Against a few hundred sidhe and some loyalist commoners, we thought we stood a good chance.

We were wrong. The sidhe had us outgunned. A flight of wyverns spit venom from above, tearing a hole in our tight ranks. Sidhe arrows and cantrips also thinned out the defenders. Our nockers couldn't move their war engines fast enough to bear down on the advancing enemy. The mounted sidhe moved in liquid formations, diffuse until the moment the charge struck home. Then they broke apart again and rode around to the flanks. Leaving his own unit as rearguard, Brindel moved his forces into the city. Unwelcome news came then that the sidhe had taken by surprise and captured several key freeholds. Fighting raged in the streets for hours as the commoners slowly fell back to what freeholds they had left. By the end of the day, Brindel knew the battle was lost, and it was decided to send the bulk of the forces out of the city so they could join with the

1971: The Year of Battle

May 2 — Peace of the Courts

May 7-July 10 — The Milehigh Campaign

July 4-5 — Battle of Denver

October 4-7 — First Battle of the Plains

1972: The Year of Failing Hope

February 27 — Battle of Hot Springs

March 19-14 — Battle for the Arch

April 10-June 1 — The Bluegrass Campaign

armies to the east. At midnight, he launched a final offensive, spearheaded by the Brigade of the Canyon. Once the battle was joined, columns of commoners began a hard march away from the city, hoping to harry the sidhe along the way. The attack was far more successful than anyone could have hoped, and in half an hour the sidhe were either holed up in freeholds or pushed to the suburbs. Risking all on the hope of driving the nobles to ground, Brindel then ordered the retreating commoners to return. The returning column was set upon and annihilated in a terrible ambush; the sidhe's retreat had been feigned, and now the west was doomed. It's been said that General Brindel and his staff, aflame in the Dragon's Ire, took down many sidhe before they were killed. The shattered remnants of the com-

The Fall of Silver Creek

Silver Creek was an artist's colony in the Colorado Rockies. Silver Creek Freehold was home to nearly a dozen changelings. When we heard the coast was lost, we vowed to fight. Most of us believed that our freehold would be bypassed in favor of capturing Denver. Therefore, half our number headed east to bolster the city's defenses. The rest of us — our leader Astrid, Gilmel the troll, "Furfoot" Freddy, a knocker named Zane, little Jane Doe and myself — remained behind to protect our hold and watch over our Dreamers.

It was dusk, two days later. The watch-hawk keened once before a chimerical dart transfixed her. Three sidhe were upon us even as we reacted. Two of us fell, wounded, beneath one flashing sword. I drew my bow, but another one of the pointy-eared devils laughed and waved her hand as if twisting an apple from a branch. At that moment, my bow shattered. The third sidhe, well, no words can truly describe him. Clad in black and silver armor, with a dazzling silver sword, his long hair billowing from his helmetless head — he was truly too terrifying to behold. I couldn't bring myself to draw my puny sword against him; I was afraid to, since I was sure his notice would signal my doom.

The struggle lasted only moments more. We were disarmed and brought into the yard to kneel before the dread lord. "T'was clear enough, you have chosen to stand against the rightful rulers of this land," he began. "Though you have committed high treason and should be treated accordingly, we understand that the mists of time might make your kind forgetful of duty and honor. Therefore, we shall be magnanimous and let you live, so that when this petty incursion is finished you may swear fealty and join your proper place in society." His haughty expression hardened a fraction. "However, you must learn your place, and do nothing to make us reconsider our generous offer of clemency. Therefore...." We all shuddered as we felt, almost saw, the sidhe gather Glamour around him like a cloak. When he spoke, it had the ring of power in it. "As

the might of the sidhe rules the actions of the commons, so does your will rule your hand. From this moment until the moment you swear fealty to your new lord and master, you will not question the power of the sidhe, nor move against, nor act against the sidhe, nor consider such a thought or act, lest your hand bring deeds to mark your thoughts." With that, the three of them turned and stepped into nothingness.

I had no idea what he had said, but I knew from the buzz I felt that we were royally screwed. A second later, I heard a loud smack. Gilmel had slapped himself across the face, and from the color of his cheek, I'd say it was pretty hard. Then Freddy balled up his fist and began hammering his thigh. I suddenly realized what the sidhe had said, but as I opened my mouth to curse the bastard, my fist filled it.

This went on for four months. You can't begin to understand what it was like — steeling your mind to think about anything but the one thing that's foremost in your head, day after day! We were bruised, then bloodied, then maimed, all the while hiding our greatest hate in the world from even ourselves. I eventually lost an eye, and my innocence. His will and honor broken, Gilmel kissed a train after a month; Jane Doe pranced on the highway until a semi put her suffering to an end. I imagine we all would have followed if it weren't for Dianira. She was a commoner sympathizer from House Fiona; because she was a noble, we could tell her all that happened. It took some doing, but somehow she managed to end the spell. She didn't break it, so much as twist the magic in on itself until it broke. It was from her that we learned how the war was going, and why our friends hadn't returned from Denver.

The tragedy of Silver Creek was repeated throughout the west. Some freeholds were slaughtered, some enslaved, but most were neutralized. The war found me a wilder and left me a grump at the age of 17.

— Mic Tanner, boggan grump.

moners either fled east or went underground where they kept up an active resistance until the end of the war.

After Denver, Dafyll resumed his advance. Sidhe riding before and beside the main force neutralized many of our freeholds, although they were in too big a hurry to put a concerted effort into their attacks.

The Milehigh campaign was a critical setback to any large-scale organization the commoner military possessed, for the main generals, key staff and a serious chunk of soldiers and weapons had been captured. For the next couple of months, no leader could be said to command more than a city's worth of Kithain at a time. The Host continued to move across the landscape, assisting the local sidhe in "putting down the rebels."

Defense of the west fell to Calin Bloodforged, a troll recently retired from the U.S. Army. The most influential tactician west of the Mississippi, General Calin organized the free western forces he could muster, along with some eastern units. More wary of ruses than his predecessor, he took his cobbled-together army to the plains west of Kansas City. Nockers and trolls hastily threw up crude fortifications and arrayed their forces to meet the oncoming Royalists.

While not the disaster of Denver, it was a costly defeat nonetheless. Besides having better mobility and tactics, the nobles possessed several great treasures thought lost with the Shattering: shields that shattered blades or war hammers, swords that mowed down the opponents like a scythe on barley, horns that struck unreasoning terror in the Host's foes. The sidhe's new surprise was a pack of semi-controlled war manticores that fell upon the commoner lines, stinging and rending. Two of these beasts were dispatched at great cost by a company of trolls, while the third turned on its handler. For two days, the battle raged across several miles of country as the commoners sallied forth and then retreated to their earthworks. Again, the sidhe attempted to encircle the commoners, but the beleaguered army managed to withdraw in good order. Calling upon bitter experiences in the Viet Nam's Ia Drang Valley, Calin set a trap for the pursuing sidhe army, which he sprang the next day. The ambush, which caught the complacent nobles by surprise, nearly routed the lead element of the advancing army. Unfortunately, more loyalist commoners than sidhe fell at that skirmish, but the enemy advance was checked long enough to make good the commons' escape.

For over a year, there were no battles to match Denver, but any veteran will tell you about the grim struggles at St. Louis, Lexington and a handful of other cities. After two years without any major victories, commoner morale was in the pits, and not a few swore fealty to the sidhe.

Several war leaders, first among them Generals Sevarik, Topaz and Lyros, joined Calin in taking command of the disparate armies of the commoners. Lyros, a powerful troll noble before the Resurgence, was seen by many as the commander-in-chief of the commoner forces. These generals and the others who served later were well respected. They had to be, for they asked Kithain to leave their holds and homes to fight a seemingly invincible opponent.

The Great Lakes Campaign and the Battle of Isle Royale

Nockers had built serviceable if somewhat bizarre-looking ships of war to keep the nobles out of the Great Lakes. Not to be outdone, the nobles had their own ships — long, sleek crafts with billowed sails driven by unnatural winds. They were as beautiful as they were deadly. The Great Lakes Campaign was unique in that it was mostly fought on water and shoreline.

In the western half of Lake Superior lies a sparsely populated island known as Isle Royale, and it was here that the sidhe went to make a base. It was said that Dafyll considered building Tara-nar on Isle Royale.

Two fleets, each with a dozen or more ships, squared off south of the island. With cannon, burning arrows, catapults and finally with grappling hooks, rams and swords, the nobles and commoners battled for the better part of the day. The nockers had heavier armaments, but the sidhe had faster and more maneuverable vessels. Though both sides were battered, the commoners were the ones who had to limp away. The sidhe allowed the retreat, for they were more interested in the island, and by nightfall sidhe forces had occupied it. They had quite a surprise that night, for they found out too late that they were in the territory of some particularly misanthropic werewolves who set upon the company with vicious abandon. Only a fraction of the invaders managed to return to their ships.

As you know, Tara-nar was built in New York State. Even today, changelings give Isle Royale a wide berth. I'd love to ask the fleet commander if he knew all along about the wolves; I suspect he did. Unfortunately, he was killed a month later when his flagship went down under a heavy barrage.

The Battle of Philadelphia

Philadelphia was an important piece of real estate, if for no other reason than its symbolic value. Liberty Hall, where the Declaration of Liberty was signed, represented the spirit of the commoner struggle. It was guarded by the Legion of Liberty, commoners fanatically devoted to the cherished ideals of freedom and democracy. The battle was the most bitter of the war up to that point; even the sidhe's magic and tactics could not easily defeat their determined foes. The Royalists had to

1973: The Year of Attrition

January 5 — The Battle of Philadelphia

May 1 — Foundations laid for Tara-Nar

May 3 - October 21 — The Great Lakes Campaign

May 28 — The Battle for the Huron

August 11 — The Battle of Isle Royale

October 2 — The Battle of Niagara Falls

December 25 - Jan 1 — The Battle of Manhattan;
Dafyll slain

January 1, 1974 — David Ardry discovers Caliburn

Prisoners

If you surrender, you shall be treated as prisoners of war, but if I have to storm your works, you may expect no quarter.

— Nathan Bedford Forrest

Despite what you've heard, the armies didn't go around killing the wounded and giving no quarter. Sure, it happened sometimes, but it's in a soldier's best interest not to kill an enemy that surrenders. Of course, the nobles had to learn that the hard way. While most of the sidhe were relatively merciful with captured commoners, a handful ordered mass executions of the "rebels." Once word of this got out, you can be sure no one ever surrendered; that was why the fighting in St. Louis was so bloody. At one point, a sidhe patrol found the heads of a dozen sidhe stuck on a circle of pikes. A note on one pike read (in blood), "An eye for an eye. A dead prisoner for a dead prisoner." Soon after, the sidhe boned up on their Geneva Convention.

Prisoners of the nobles, so I hear, were given a chance to swear loyalty to the sidhe; if they didn't they were chucked into prison or kept as hostages. Some were tortured or interrogated; others had their wounds tended and received good rations. A few were Geased to sneak back and commit some sort of mischief against the commoner army. It all depended on the noble in charge.

The commoners had similar fates for their prisoners. Some Unseelie liked to torture their prisoners, and some kept their charges locked in iron cages, a particularly grievous fate for a sidhe. Most were treated with whatever respect they had earned; in other words, a sidhe who wasn't constantly throwing curses on the heads of her jailers or trying to escape would be treated decently. It wasn't unheard of for friendships — of a sort — to develop between captor and captive.

There were a number of prisoner exchanges during the war. The commoners usually got the better end of the deal, since the sidhe seemed to agree that one noble was worth two or three commoners.

— Peter McAlpin, satyr wilder

capture the city one street at a time, wading through red snow all the while. Eventually, however, they won through to Liberty Hall. It's said that the first sidhe to enter the sacred hall fell into Bedlam on the spot, but the others passed him to storm the building. Whether the Royalists would have taken prisoners is irrelevant, since none of the Hall's defenders asked for quarter. It was probably one of the bloodiest battles in the war, and it was a bitter loss. The only bright point to the battle was that the Royalist army stopped for a couple of months to catch their breath. No more real battles occurred until the beginning of the Great Lakes Campaign.

The Battle of Niagara Falls

They couldn't hit an elephant at this dist —

— General John Sedgwick (last words)

Niagara Falls, New York was a Royalist stronghold. Late in 1973, the sidhe attacked Niagara Falls, Ontario in an effort to secure the entire falls for themselves. The commoners of Ontario took defensive positions on the Canadian side of the Rainbow Bridge and awaited the onslaught. A company of about 50 mounted sidhe, lead by Countess Aife Silvesta, attempted to dislodge the commoners who held the Rainbow Bridge. The sidhe hurled blade, arrow and cantrip against the defenders, landing many blows, few of them telling.

During the melee, Doireann ni Scathach crossed the rough and frigid river and climbed the gorge face on the American side until she could see the sidhe leader. Doireann's arrow flew over 80 yards. The stories said it passed between two bodyguards before burying itself in the countess' chest. Their leader dying, the Royalists redoubled their efforts against the commoner shield wall, but could not break through. Both sides were much reduced, but it was the nobles who withdrew from the field. Though the sidhe were constantly probing the Canadian defenses, no more major attacks occurred during the war.

The Battles of Manhattan

As armies marched around the northeastern U.S and Canada, some found it odd that New York City, one of the more Glamorous cities in the Northeast, wasn't attacked. Looking at the battle maps, it seemed like the sidhe were actually avoiding the area. The nobles' strategy became clear: by attacking bases to the north and south, they were driving commoners toward the city; by surrounding NYC, they were blocking escape routes.

Battle Objectives

The object of war is not to die for your country but to make the other bastard die for his.

— George Patton

In the Accordance War strategy, a stand-up battle usually had one or two objectives. The first was to take territory; this was typical when there were freeholds to claim. The Battle of the Bay and the Southern Campaign were examples of this. The second objective was to deplete the enemy's men and material. Denver and the two Plains battles were in the second category.

We eventually learned that large field battles were the Royalist's meat and drink. It gave them plenty of room to use their cavalry to good effect, while we hardly had a horse, chimerical or otherwise, between us. After several of these debacles, we wised up and switched to guerrilla tactics of hit-and-run ambushes. Of course, most of the troll commanders would conduct their stand-up fights when they could.

— Vera Nkubah, eshu spy

The annihilation of the commoner army and the capture of those freeholds would be a crushing blow to the resistance, which was the intent. Gathering what soldiers his could, Lyros determined to make a stand in Manhattan.

The Battle of Manhattan was a kind of turning point of the war. Everyone but the nitpicky historians tend to lump all the battles of the Manhattan Campaign under the name of the Battle of Manhattan, but actually, there were a number of engagements. At the beginning of the campaign, most of Long Island and the lands surrounding New York were more or less under sidhe control. The sidhe swept through borough after borough until only the island of Manhattan was in commoner hands.

The largest segment of the battle commenced at dawn on the 30th of December, as sidhe units charged across the bridges and leapt out of ships in the harbor. They met little resistance until they reached Central Park; there, they met a troll army making ready behind hasty fortifications. As they had for most of the war, the sidhe took the initiative by a series of feints and commando attacks before sweeping over the barriers and smashing the army. The trolls and the mixed-kith companies called up to support them took grievous losses. Lyros and his forces renewed their lines the following day, and the battle shifted back and forth. The sluagh came into their own as intelligence gatherers and trap setters, insuring that the invaders could not truly relax anywhere on the island.

The nobles gained ground, but at a terrible cost. Each time the commoners retreated, the advancing sidhe touched off traps designed by nockers and sluagh. With each apparent retreat, the regrouped units had less room to maneuver. By noon, the troll units had been cut off from other commoner companies and were in danger of being destroyed. Nearly surrounded in his headquarters in Greenwich, Lyros gave the order to scatter and conduct a street-to-street battle. The surprised sidhe's tactics were less effective in the alleyways, while the commoners — especially the sluagh — were at their best. Had things continued, the battle might have been fought to a draw.

But we all know it didn't continue. When word of the Dafyll's death in the bowels of the borough reached the sidhe, they had three different reactions. Some were shocked into inaction, leaving the battle to mourn their leader. Others went into a berserk frenzy which, though terrifying, lacked the skill and finesse which had backed us into a corner in the first place. Finally, a number of ranking individuals ignored their battle plans (and us) and began hunting for the late warlord's sword.



1974: The Year of Victories

March 25 - April 10 — The Peninsular Campaign

April 1 - October 10 — The Shenandoah Campaign

January 1 - September 2 — The Atlantic Campaign

May 4 — The Battle of Buckhead

October 30 — The Bourbon Street Massacre

The Air War

The sidhe had a number of wyverns, which are two-legged dragons that spit caustic venom.

One of the strangest airships in the sidhe arsenal was the corrig, a kind of self-propelled, living airbag the size of a small house. A mouth on the front took in air which was blown out of “gills” on either side of the body. Two or three Royalists stood in a gondola suspended from a harness attached to the creature; from that vantage, they could spy, fire their nocker bows or fling cantrips at the army below. Opposing arrows bounced right off the rubbery-looking skin. I have no idea how they controlled the things, and they were all gone by the end of the war, victims of Banality.

The commoners had nocker technology, from ornithopters to airships to improbable cruisers that seemed to come straight out of a E.R. Burroughs novel. Most of the time, these fleets would join over unpopulated areas where Banality wouldn't be as strong. Disaster struck during an air battle in West Virginia, when a damaged passenger plane on its way to an emergency landing flew into the middle of the fight. Every aircraft and winged beast, with all their crews, disappeared into the Dreaming; no searcher has yet found a trace of them.

The leaders who went on the wild goose chase often drew off their knights and retainers to aid in the search, taking more pressure off us. The warlord's death gave commoner morale a real boost, and the trolls milked it for all it was worth. Sidhe were attacked from all sides, and knightly companies were crushed between the 4th Troll and the Queens' Own Commons. Units from the 2nd Brooklyn Infantry spearheaded the mop up and were the ones who almost caught True Thomas and his young noble charges. By dawn of the following day, the sidhe had been kicked out of Manhattan. Of course, fighting continued in the city for the rest of the war, but Manhattan would remain staunchly in commoner hands.

And Dafyll? No, I don't know who killed him, and I won't condone nor condemn the action. It happened, and because it did, we won the battle and David Ardry discovered Caliburn. It really gets my blood going when, to this very day, nobles fume about the “dastardly criminal attack.” It was one sidhe, in the middle of a war. Compare that with the wholesale slaughter of dozens of commoners who came to the sidhe unarmed and in good faith? Nothing done by any of the commoners during the entire war can match the baseness of that vile act back on Beltaine, 1970.

Sorry. It really sticks in my craw, that's all.

After the death of Dafyll, the progress of the Restorationists was much less certain. Manhattan had shown that the sidhe could be stopped and even beaten. We got wise to some of the sidhe tricks, and invented a few of our own. We learned quickly, and that gave us the strength to take the fight to the enemy. Also, the sidhe had lost their point of unity, and had no one

to replace him. The war bogged down as Dafyll's lieutenants conducted local and regional campaigns with their own fragments of the great host. We still lost some, but we managed to win a few, too. Some of the “subjugated” territories rose up again. They weren't much more successful than the first time, but they kept the western nobles occupied.

The Fall of Willows

Barabas ap Eiluned, who claimed the kingship of the south-eastern portion of the United States, conducted a ruthless and methodical conquest of his territory. His first campaign was a series of invasions and sieges down the Atlantic coast, taking nearly every major freehold and distributing them to his knights and lackeys. This was followed by a westward series of strikes. A couple of freeholds were destroyed during this campaign; although each side points to the other, the truth of the matter hasn't come out yet. His best-known atrocity was during the taking of New Orleans. When the defenders of the French Quarter refused to lay down their arms, the Royalist forces stormed the place; gathering the survivors together, the king had them all hanged as a warning to others. It's with no small satisfaction to me that a decade and a half later, Barabas found himself in the same unenviable position.

The Peninsular Campaign

The Accordance War was less violent in the Kingdom of White Sands than in its northern neighbor. Queen Morganna was very well received on both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts; she was fair, gracious and exceedingly compassionate to the commoners. However, the changelings in the more rural areas were less inclined to surrender their independence. Furthermore, a band of renegade commoners, led by a satyr calling himself King Walter, claimed Orlando as their own. This fief included Walt Disney World, a very powerful focus of Glamour that had opened a couple of years before. Walter's supporters moved against Morganna but were beaten back to Disney in a matter of days. King Walter was imprisoned in Morganna's palace, which, from what I've heard about the Queen, isn't that much of a punishment. They pretty much stayed out of the war from then on.

The North Plains Campaign

The North Plains was one of the less successful sidhe campaigns of the war. The first leader, Failana, was killed in a Nunnehi ambush. Her successor, Nevarr, retaliated against the native fae, which cost him time and resources. Thus diverted, he let several commoner bands slip past him and race north. He turned his army and followed, certain of a quick victory. Commoner forces, under General Calin, moved like they were trying to protect something in the open grasslands on the Saskatchewan-North Dakota border. The sidhe took the bait and moved in, ready to destroy the commoner resistance and then find out what was so important there. It was ruse, a successful attempt to maneuver the enemy into a favorable position for a battle: a high ground on open country where mortals were not likely to intrude. While not overwhelming, the Second Battle of the Plains was nonetheless a victory for the commoners.

The Battle of North Ford: Commoner Victory

We were prepared, we thought. Our freehold was barricaded and booby-trapped, ready for a siege. What we didn't know about was the *trod*. As all eyes peered through boarded windows and arrow slits, the enemy began pouring out of a door we never knew existed, capturing our base and nearly half the city's *Kithain*. From there, it went downhill. We were chased around the city for days, bereft of a Glamour source for healing or magic. Any stand we made was easily broken as we were outflanked, outnumbered and just plain outdone. Each time we ran, we left behind another brave fighter or two. Finally, tired, wounded, and demoralized, Captain Phelps gathered us for a final stand. He figured that if we didn't act then, we wouldn't have the strength to put up any kind of fight. We drew the line at the warehouses near the railyard. I can still remember watching the enemy form up, laughing and singing like they were playing a game. This time, they weren't trying any fancy maneuvering; I guess they didn't think they needed to, as banged up as we were. They didn't even ask for our surrender, damn them. No, they just wanted a toe-to-toe slugfest, and they wanted us all dead.

They advanced on us like they were on a Sunday stroll. Our ranks were thinning under the steady rain of arrows from the *sidhe* archers, and there wasn't anything we could do; we lost our archers in the same skirmish where the commander fell. Still, we braced to meet the advance.

Then came the rhythmic beat of steel against pavement. The *sidhe* heard it too, and they stopped. Then we saw them — a dozen of the meanest, wickedest redcaps I've ever seen. Each one had nail piercings and tattoos so disgusting I don't even want to think about it. And they all had red caps (judging by the stains on their foreheads, I don't think they were dyed with henna). All wore these heavy steel-shod boots that rang and thundered when they marched, and all carried these wicked-looking, very real spears. But the leader made them all look like cub scouts. He wore a shirt of red scales, and he had screw piercings running all the way up his arms. Plus, he had the biggest spear of the lot.

When they got closer, everybody on the field felt it, a cold that heads straight for your bones, the nails-on-a-chalkboard kind of chill that creeps under your skin and tickles your hairs. The spears were all cold frigging iron. One of the

graybearded fellows whispered, "That's Toren na Gulon, of the Iron Brigade! Gods, let them be on our side!" His prayer was answered as the redcaps formed a wedge and marched towards the nobles with leveled spears.

Well, the *sidhe* weren't completely stupid. They started shooting at the redcaps, but the supermen laughed — a sound like an earthquake — and swatted the arrows aside with their spears. One of the traitor trolls lobbed a cantrip powerful enough to knock down a barn, but Toren thrust his spear into the oncoming spell, and it fizzled.

Toren was at the point of the wedge as it drove into the enemy. He batted aside a *sidhe*'s sword and buried the iron in the man's belly. You have no idea, lass, what kind of sound a man makes when his very soul is burned away. You can't even imagine it.

Now this whole time, we're just standing there, our jaws on the asphalt, too dumbfounded to move. As the first knight fell, we all heard the troll yell, "Talibin!" He ran another *sidhe* clean through, and cried "Rikard!" And then we realized: those were names of the Martyrs of Beltaine. It was like he was avenging each in kind. The memory of the Night of the Iron Knives got us going again, b'God. With the words "Beltaine!" and "Avenge!" on our lips, we charged forward with all our strength. Of course, the enemy caught on pretty quick, too, and they were running before we could reach them. We were chasing down nobles for hours. Okay, some of us (I won't point fingers) didn't hear too well when a foe we ran to ground asked for quarter, but don't think they would have spared us either.

As we straggled back to the field, we met with a gruesome sight. The Iron Brigade was carrying away the *sidhe* banner. The pole was topped with the enemy captain's head! Several of the redcaps were soaking their hats the pools of blood. What they did with the bodies...several of Phelps' men got violently ill on the spot, and I'm not ashamed to count myself among them.

It was horrible. I'm proud of myself for standing with the others; I'm not proud about everything I saw or did. But I won't apologize. It was war.

— Jonathan Silvereye, satyr, VAW

The War Winds Down

As the years progressed, the surge of enthusiasm the commoners gained from Manhattan began to wane. Rumors that a High King had been discovered, and that Caliburn was again in noble hands, took the wind out of our sails. Many felt the war couldn't be won. Yet few spoke of surrender, since we believed that would lead to a life of slavery or a death of iron.

Large-scale offensive strikes against the *sidhe* were less common, as motleys focused on retaking and holding their old

1975: The Year of Endings

January 1 - July 31 — The Southern Campaign
April 11 — The Second Battle of the Plains
August 5 - September 20 — The Siege of Nashville
October 23 — Commoners meet with David
December 2 — The Accord signed

The Second Battle of the Plains

The next dreadful thing to a battle lost is a battle won.

— Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington

This was probably the last major field battle of the war. It was also among the largest, with thousands of Kithain on the field. True, it was another set-piece field battle, but we weren't the green troops we'd been when Dafyll pushed across the continent. We were battle hardened, disciplined and a good deal wiser. We had another advantage as well, in the form of better equipment and nocker technology. During the war, our smiths and engineers were testing new designs in battle and improving them all the time. Here on the plains came the ultimate test. Now we had rapid-fire chimerical crossbows, and the finest weapons and armor we could loot from the enemy. We matched their cavalry with our catapult tanks and ballista scooters and their griffins and wyverns against our airships and ornithopters.

The battle raged bitterly for several hours, and its outcome was in doubt until the very end. Here the sidhe broke against the 4th Troll Commons like waves against the rocks; there the 11th North Georgia struck at shadows as the Scarabs slipped past them.

Finally, the recall was sounded, and the Restorationists left the field. We regrouped to pursue our foes, but we weren't in any shape to carry the fight to them. Instead, we tended the wounded, gathered prisoners and the Mist-taken and took stock of our situation.

A great many had fallen, and many more would suffer as the parting curses of our enemies took their toll. General Lyros' favorite, Commander Brydina, fell to a blast of wyvern venom, and our troll commander also lost several of his best captains.

This battle vies with Manhattan as our greatest victory. In my opinion, it was greater; Manhattan was largely won because the enemy commander was slain by treachery. At Second Plains we won by our own strength, not because someone assassinated the enemy leader.

I returned to the field a few years ago. Though no mortal eye can see, the fae blood and mighty Arts have fed a wild forest of red brambles that reach out and entangle any who come near. Blood drawn from a thousand pricks falls on the ground to nourish the horrible briars. And so the war continues to claim its victims.

—Tarabin Vintarro, aide-de-camp to General Calin

territories. For most changelings, the war was more localized and more personalized, with the motleys of one or two freeholds fighting a self-proclaimed baron or count in another freehold.

The Treaty of Accord

Word spread that David Ardry wanted a meeting with the leadership of the commoner forces. It should be obvious what we thought about that proposal — did they think we could forget Beltaine after a few years? But the trolls and some of the other elders actually considered going to the meeting. General Malory told me that Ardry, who claimed the high kingship, had proven himself a most honorable and reasonably egalitarian man. Still, there were not a few of us who were already considering who were most qualified to replace our leadership should the commoner representatives fall into another ambush. I was chosen to attend the council, though why I'm not certain. I can tell you, I was as surprised to return to my hold as my comrades were to see me.

The High King was pleasant without being supercilious. He did not dawdle but came quickly to the point. I suspect his brevity was a preemptive strike; perhaps he knew that Malory or Caprin would begin rattling off demands at the first opportunity (as it happens, they had both spent the journey rehearsing). The terms for peace were laid out. We were to follow the feudal structure the antiquated nobles preferred. In return, the nobles would have to allow commoners into their ranks now and then, and they'd have to let commoners have a say in things through a Parliament of Dreams that King David wanted to put together. True, it was not much of a democracy, it turns out, but that's what you get when the rulers write the rules.

Well, we were pretty impressed by the plan, and more so by the King's earnestness. The distaste, if not outrage, evident in the eyes of many of Ardry's aides lent further weight to his words and made us snicker a bit under our breaths. Our leaders were for the most part convinced, but maybe they were softened up by the king's oratory and natural charm. I don't know. Certainly, it was a tough sell to the folks back home. Some of them didn't like our big concession; after all, overthrowing the nobility was the whole reason for the war, wasn't it? There were some long evenings of heated debate, I can tell you. Everybody wanted peace, but many thought — and think — the price for peace was too high. Some motleys were on the verge of rejecting the Accord, even if it meant becoming outlaws.

Then, the trolls — nearly the whole damn kith — threw their support behind King David. Well, that tore it. I remember wondering if some deal had been struck behind closed doors, and I haven't necessarily been convinced otherwise. Whatever the circumstances, opposition to the Accord collapsed in the face of troll capitulation. Still, in my freehold it wasn't a time for misgivings, but a time for celebration. The war was over, and fae wouldn't fight fae any more.

Hey, we could dream, couldn't we?

Other Views

Yes, I fought for the nobles. Does that make me disloyal to my kith? Hell, no. The return of the nobles was a sign that Spring is near, if only we have the courage to strive for it. That means uniting under the sidhe's banner. Short sighted, that's what the rebels were. They'd rather rule in Hell than serve in Heaven.

— Kent Maxwell, boggan grump

I'm neither troll nor sidhe. War isn't a glorious affair, it's just about destruction and pain. The day the Accord was signed was the happiest of my life.

— Elizabeta, sluagh wilder

The boggans of this world don't understand. Yes, war is a dirty, painful business, and the cost is great. But for trolls, sidhe and yes, even the redcaps, battle is what we are about. We are creatures of the Dreaming, and our role is the martial struggle, whether in a duel of honor or in a legion. Dana created the first troll with a sword by his side. Always have we been defenders, and always will we be so. Those who call for a peace without honor do not understand that we can no more acquiesce to such a thing than we could stop breathing. To lay down a sword when honor demands to strike — it goes against every fiber of our being. Ask the saint to renounce her God, ask a mother to slay her child, ask a troll to kneel before a tyrant, and the answer will be the same. To call us warmongers is to be ignorant of what we were created for, of what we are.

— Egil Magnarson, troll wilder

Countess Freddi was real friendly to us until she got her own freehold. Then she ignored us. So things worked out great. Except when she caught Brekka making fun of her in court. Then the Countess sicced her two big mastiffs on her. And they breath fire, too. Lucky for Brek, she could outrun them. I really hope her tail fur grows back, though.

— Kaatje van Patten, pooka childling

The War was a boon for members of the Unseelie Court. Unburden yourself of scruples, and you can make a fortune selling weapons or information to both sides. I didn't do any such thing, you understand, but I know a few guys that drained unprotected freeholds while everybody was off dying. And a few redcaps and darker trolls set up protection rackets for undermanned freeholds, eventually protecting their way into ownership. But hey, more power to 'em.

— Peigi Eightfingers, redcap grump

The baron I serve is wise and just, a sterling example of his house. Even after the Accord, when he could have easily taken our territory, he asked us for the privilege. We granted it and have never regretted our decision. He takes his obligations to his people most seriously, unlike many who see their lands as a supply of Glamour and soldiers. He protects the land and his charges from monster, raider, and Dauntain. I am proud to serve him.

— Finlay the Fair, troll wilder and thane to House Fiona

On the Glory of War

*The old men march slowly, all bent, stiff and sore
The tired old men from a forgotten war
And the young people ask "What are they marching for?"
And I ask myself the same question.*

— Eric Bogle, "The Band Played Waltzin' Matilda"

The war was hard, true enough. And long. Sometimes I can't bear thinking about all the friends I lost, at Manhattan, at Turner Bridge, at Holkum's Fairground and all the other fights.

But in a way, I miss it. I mean, I had a purpose. I was fighting for something. I could look at the redcap next to me, and even if I didn't know his name, he was my closest friend in the world at that moment. We were all comrades, and whether we lived or died, we knew we were right. I was young, dammit, and I thought we could win the world! I was a warrior with a cause! Now, what am I? A damn gray-haired grump nobody wants to listen to. Hell, half of my holdmates weren't even a gleam in their father's eye when we were facing the Shining Host. It's ancient history to them, and I'm their resident dinosaur. And the sidhe are still in charge.

What I wouldn't give for a little youth and pride.

— Siegurd Fyuri, troll grump

The Aftermath

Civil war, such as you have just passed through, naturally engenders feelings of animosity, hatred and revenge. It is our duty to divest ourselves of all such feelings....

— Nathan B. Forrest

So, the treaty was signed, and all lived as friends forever more, right? Bullshit. The war carried on a while longer. The grudges were too strong. "We shall have peace...right after I claim this freehold." "We'll play nice...as soon as Count Ratbastard has his accident." Hell, for the next of couple years leaders from both sides were getting fumble-fingered with knives, falling asleep at the wheel, stumbling into dragon's lairs and what have you. The High King did his best to stop it, even appointing trusted commoner Kithain as sheriffs to investigate and stop the killings. One of the king's own advisors, Lord Melizein, was brutally murdered, and I know that fellow wanted the Accord to work out as planned. He didn't really deserve that kind of death. But you know the thing that really pisses me off? Some of the less popular lords "invited" commoner "wards" to stay in noble freeholds. They said it was a "gesture of goodwill" to let one of the Great Unwashed live with the aristocracy. But we all know they're insurance against an uprising. The practice continues to this very day, and for all his political skill, King David can't seem to figure out what's really going on. Or maybe he doesn't care.

Well, I shouldn't poison the wells for you. High King David certainly knows how to get people to work together without

reaching for their hilts. I guess everybody's more or less resigned to the way things are. But I don't trust the sidhe, no, not one bit. I wish the trolls were still in charge.

The War of Ivy

I think the effects of the Resurgence were colored by the attitudes of the local commoners. For instance, in England the bulk of fae accepted their new rulers with resignation at worst and joyous hope at best. Granted, there were a handful of anarchists and such, but they were too few to cause the rest of us much trouble for very long. But we commoners surely couldn't complain; after all, we have two kingdoms ruled by nobles of common stock. Overall, we looked forward to a new Lyonesse.

As one might expect, Eire took the Restoration very hard. Unlike the current unrest amongst mortals, the fae's conflict engulfed the entire island in blood. The biggest mistake of the English sidhe was to try and get involved. Though beset on all sides, the Irish nobles made it clear that they would handle the taming of the country themselves. Perhaps they were jealous of their land, which to be fair is arguably the richer in trods and glens than anywhere else in Britain or Europe. Eventually, of course, the Irish sidhe prevailed (the Dreaming will have its way, after all), although to be quite candid the Irish fae are somewhat lax about maintaining class distinctions. Not as much as the Americans or the Australians, of course...I wonder if one could find a correlation between proximity of a colony to Mother England and integrity of standards. But I digress.

A Timeline of the War of Ivy and the '69

July 21, 1969 — The Resurgence begins; in Caledonia, King Ross defeats the Glaswegian Defense Union. An uneasy truce begins in Albion and Cymru. In Hibernia, the Resurgence is called the Return and causes great strife; most hostilities cease within two years

June, 1970 — Word of the Beltaine Massacre spreads; commoners attack nobles unprovoked in Albion and Cymru; most common forces are defeated

September, 1970 — Battle of the New Forest, one of the few commoner victories

March, 1972 — Battle of Oxford; Lord Berwin Lindon, a sidhe, defeats troll Lady Garyn Garfield in single combat and claims the town

Imbolc, 1973 — Gwilym, seneschal of Gwynedd, makes a rousing speech in the freehold of Yr Wyddfa Fawr, calling for peace

Beltaine, 1973 — The Treaty of Ivy signed in Albion and Cymru. Sporadic fighting continues over the next four years in Caledonia; most fae consider this business as usual

Imbolc, 1977 — The Caledonian Compact officially ends the '69 and sets up an alliance between sidhe monarchs

A Timeline of the Five Years War

July 21, 1969 — The Resurgence

Fall, 1969 — Major fighting breaks out in Heidelberg, Paris and Berlin

Spring, 1970 — Siege of Munich; founding of the Silver Rose

September 21, 1970 — Battle of the Black Forest, a narrow commoner victory

October 1, 1970 — Second Siege of Munich; the city falls to the sidhe

November 3, 1970 — Battle of the Don, another sidhe victory

Winter, 1971 — First nocker war machines appear, with devastating results

April 30, 1971 — Munich retaken by commoners

Summer, 1971 — Neustria becomes a haven for the nobles and their official base of operations

Fall, 1971 — Oktoberfest Massacre kills a number of sidhe

December 3, 1971 — Truce of the White Mountains, lasting until commoner siege of Heidelberg

August 6, 1972 — Battle of Heidelberg, which remains a sidhe stronghold

September 20 – 27, 1972 — Siege and fall of Cologne to commoners

October 31, 1972 — Second Truce of the White Mountains; ends with sidhe siege at Prague

December 11, 1972 — Battle of Prague

March 15, 1973 — Battle of Krakow

May 29, 1973 — Battle of Strasbourg, which remains in Neustrian territory

August 25, 1973 — Battle of the Rhine, a major naval engagement and commoner victory

January 1, 1974 — Beginning of Galacian Armistice, which holds firm

May 1, 1974 — The official founding of the Galacian Confederation; end of the war

Cymru, the land just behind Eire in Glamorous resources and somewhat ahead in isolationism, also faced a power struggle. Rebellion was not quite as pervasive in Wales as in Ireland, and thankfully less blood was spilled.

It can be safely assumed that the Scots fae would have something to say about the Resurgence. The proud Highlanders would not give up fighting amongst themselves without interference from true nobility. The War of Ivy is not truly ended there; the Highlanders raid across the borders periodically, and when the sidhe advance north they are hammered by hordes of kilted warmongers. The lowland Caledonians are far more reasonable, being more concerned with fighting the forces of rival sidhe than fighting the sidhe in general.

The Five Years War

I have spoken with scholars who witnessed the restoration in other parts of the world and came up with some very different stories. The jumble of Leagues, Unions and Alliances that make up the Galacian Confederation didn't take the nobility's return with very good humor, nor did they need a tragedy like the Beltaine Massacre to get their blood boiling. Right away, the commoner kith denied the sidhe's right to rule. When the nobles moved to assert their claim, they were met with a united front, an assembly of kith armed with the most fiendish array of weaponry the nocker guilds could design. For all their might and skill, they couldn't defeat the Galacian commoners. Of those who survived the Five Years War (as those on the European continent term the War of Ivy), a few agreed to settle down and live under commoner leadership; however, the majority left their homelands rather than submit to commoner rule.

Contrast this with the Kingdom of Neustria (mundanely known as France); if you ask me, they have taken the Royalist view a bit far. Imagine this — the sidhe outnumber the commoners! A bit top-heavy, don't you think? There was bloodshed to be sure, and periodic uprisings are not uncommon even now. But by all accounts the antimonarchists never stood a chance and were punished rather brutally.

Scandinavia was a model for us all; so far as I have seen, the nobles were welcomed and their rightful thrones returned. I believe the peaceful transition of power was a product of two points: first, the kith of those lands have always been pro-monarchist, and second, the ever-honorable trolls make up the largest part of the population.

The Low Countries — Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg — were largely neutral during the Five Years War, although to be perfectly frank, they abhorred the excesses of Neustria, taking in many commoner refugees. The Iberian kingdoms to the west, while embroiled in sidhe-commoner fighting for two years, spent the next two years in an interkingdom struggle.

As to our former colonies "down under," as they call it, we saw much the same effect as in your Concordia. The war in Australia and New Zealand had no starting point analogous to the Beltaine Massacre; rather, it grew slowly, as small skirmishes between noble and commoner begat larger battles.



From the '70s and '80s to the Present

The future frightens us, the past tempts us, and our lives slip away, lost in the terrible moment in between.

— Emperor Turhan, Babylon 5

For many humans, the high of the 60's crashed in the seventies. The rock stars who inspired dreamers around the country began to die from drugs or accidents. Many young people lost their vision of a better world and became Banal moneygrubbers. Others rejected either vision and became punks. The space program lost support, and the Apollo missions were canceled. There were a few minor triumphs — unmanned probes to Mars and deep space, but nothing to capture the world's attention like Apollo 11.

As the years went on, things didn't improve, either. Music went through a reinvention or two. Though the Top 40 was as uninspired as ever, folk music from around the world gained a new popularity. Nothing in the space program could match the first moon landing, but the space shuttle did stir the imagination. Eventually, the newness wore off. The grand achievement just looked too easy to excite. Unfortunately, it took the Challenger disaster to remind people how dangerous space travel is.

It took a good decade for things to quiet down after the Accordance War. Changelings used to taking care of themselves now had to bow to nobles; in turn, sidhe who had always thought unquestioned loyalty their due now had to, um, make allowances for the "headstrong, lawless" common folk. We still have our share of tension between us, but folks are a little more accustomed to the arrangement. Granted, we have room for improvement.

You might not believe it, but the Dreaming's influence is stronger now than before the Resurgence. Many take that as a sign of the coming Spring. But least one fatalistic friend of mine likens it to the brief appearance of improvement that the dying experience before sliding into oblivion. But don't despair, that wouldn't do. We've come through hard times before, and we'll do so again. Like now, with the High King gone, I have not a clue about what's in store. It may be that finding him will unite commoners and nobles; it could be we'll all take this as a signal to rebel. Life's all about cycles, and where there's a winter there'll be a spring, no matter what the doomsayers tell you. Just remember that old traditional:

*We dance ever slower as the leaves fall and spin
And the sound of the horn is the wailing of the wind
The earth is wrapped in stillness and we move in a trance
But we hold on fast to our faith in the dance.*





The Future

A Postscript from General Lyros:

"The King is dead, long live the King." This was to be the final test of our new world. When the king passed on, his heir would take his place peacefully, and lives would go on without pause. But I fear we will fail the test. David, with the failing inherent in youth, didn't proclaim his heir apparent before the kingdoms and the Dreaming. Certainly, he called young Princess Lenore his heir, but he also treated Queen Faerilyth as all but co-ruler. And then there's his sister, Morwen, now Regent, who could make a claim for the throne should she wish it. Worse yet, there are a number of Kithain who hunger for the royal throne themselves and are too foolish to realize the futility of the attempt. Still others would suffer no king to rule them, least of all a sidhe.

Oh, child, the darkness threatens us again. The appearance of King David unified the fae as nothing else could; his disappearance threatens to dissolve that union. Kithain across Concordia suspect everyone from Daintain to the High Queen herself of bringing the new Arthur down. Though I would see justice done, who did the deed is not as important to me as what comes next. Will the nobles war with each other, bringing their commoner vassals into the fray? Or will it be another war between commoner and sidhe?

Already I hear members of all kith stirring their fellows to action against one group or another. What do these agitators hope to accomplish? Have they forgotten the futile carnage of the Accordance War? Don't they realize that such a war can't be won, only lost? I fear another war will spell the end of our kind, and the slide into the Winter from which the world will never emerge.

From a Conversation with Badr al Din:

Yes, my boggan friend, I too have heard the words of war, the cries for blood. I have seen the fires of greed and anger and vengeance in the eyes of commoner and noble alike. But I am not troubled.

Do you fear the loss of King David? His loss was fated, and you shouldn't fear Fate. He was a good king and a noble soul, but he is not the one who will lead us home. The prophecies of Balin, spoken in the days of the Shattering, have made everything plain. To paraphrase: The Highborn shall return to bring light into the darkness, but the light brings little warmth to those huddled in Winter's cold. The light dims as blades snuff it out, but one of the Highborn stays the hands and joins High and Low together. This, of course, has come to pass and should be familiar enough to you. But the tale foretold continues: In his weakness the good king falls, and anarchy and darkness return. Yet in the midst of the chaos, two Kithain, one Lowborn, one High, will meet as equals.

Together, they shall discover the key that will open the Silver Gate. When the light of rarefied Glamour pours forth from the gate, then comes the True King,



who brings light and fire great as the summer sun! Seelie or Unseelie, all shall kneel to the King, and peace shall be restored to the land. Banality's grip on the world will be broken, and a new Mythic Age will arise.

I can see you're skeptical. Look at it from the point of view of the Arthurian tales. Surely you've heard the bards call David the new Arthur. But it's not so; he is Uther, the one to come before. He ruled, then fell. And the Sword was given to a Kithain who, though a restless Eshu, has a spirit as true and unyielding as stone. And only the one destined to rule this land will be able to take it from him. Makes a certain sense, does it not?

When comes the king, so comes the Spring. And it comes, never fear. Already the Seekers search for the Two. And they will be found, mark my words.

From Gloria's Journal:

I am numb with shock and self-loathing. Could what Tenara has said all be true? That awful story of Silver Creek? And the others? How can what he said about Dafyll be right? I've always been told he was a good and decent man. Yet, even if only *half* of what the satyr said were true... No, it wasn't my fault. I didn't even arrive until the Accordance War was over. And I would never, never, never do anything to hurt a commoner, except in self-defense.

And while I thought there might some kind of fuss over the loss of High King David, I really didn't think we have some kind of *war*. What General Lyros and Badr al Din have said really scare me.

I said I wanted the truth. I just didn't know it would hurt so much.

The Shot Heard Round the World?

As one might expect, commoners and their outlooks vary widely around the globe. While by no means a complete roster of fae strongholds worldwide, the following is a sampler of locales commoners may frequent, or avoid like the plague.

France — The proportion of nobles to commoners in France, or the Kingdom of Neustria as it is known to the Kithain, is about four to one. This hotbed of extreme promonarchists is probably the worst place a footloose and fancy-free common fae could find himself. Most nobles here think any commoner without an oath of fealty is a dangerous anarchist, and some staunchly traditional commoners would agree. Neustria includes the Duchies of Bayeaux in the north, Burgundy in the south and Sapphire Seas along the Mediterranean coast. Southwest France is the Aquitaine, the independent demesne of High Lord Rathesmere of House Fiona. Commoners in dire straits may be able to find a refuge in his court if their reason is good.

Spain and Portugal — Sometimes the allies of Neustria, four kingdoms comprise these lands of the Iberian Peninsula: Navarre along the Pyrennees, Aragon in the east, Leone in the northeast and Castille in the central and southern regions. Commoners, whether in service to a noble or not, are always welcomed; eshu and boggans are an integral part of the society.

The Low Countries — Nobles in the Kingdom of Flowers (the Netherlands) and the Kingdom of Golden Threads (Belgium and Luxembourg) generally abhor the Neustrians' anti-commoner outlooks. Boggan gardeners and cooks, nocker crafters and even troll dockworkers are a large percentage of the Kithain population. House Liam has a major stronghold in the Duchy of Tulips (Amsterdam) and welcomes all changelings who come in peace.

The Galacian Confederation — If Neustria is a commoner's nightmare, then this realm is her best fantasy come to life, at least in theory. The Confederation covers the mortal lands of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Finland, Eastern Europe and several nations of the former Soviet Union. Major political divisions include the northwestern Elbian Protectorate, the Bavarian League, the central Thuringian-Saxon Union, the northern Pomeranian Alliance and the Council of the White Mountains in Switzerland. The Confederation's population is about 99% commoner, withnockers, redcaps, sluagh and satyrs the most numerous kith. A group of commoners, usually elected, rules each political unit. Of course, this works better in some places than others. The Bavarian League's diet, for example, runs a strict but fair demesne; their neighboring counterparts in the Province of Venezia are laid back and even welcome the occasional noble visitor. Many of Neustria's nobles are exiles from the Galacian Confederation; at the end of the Five Years' War, they chose to leave their homelands rather than live under commoner rule. Much hatred still remains from those harsh times of the Resurgence.

Scandinavia — The Isle of Snowflakes (Iceland), and the Kingdoms of Dalarna (Sweden and Norway) and Jutland (Denmark) are peaceful and prosperous lands. Here, nobles and commoners live and work in great harmony, the latter far outnumbering the former. Not surprisingly, trolls are the largest kith, but thanks to the nations' agricultural, mineral and sylvan riches, many nockers and boggans also enjoy the fruits of the far north. Kithain of the Seelie court refer to themselves as the *lios alfar*, faeries of light, while their Unseelie cousins use the name *svart alfar*, faeries of darkness. Most Kithain of this region, noble and commoner alike, are staunch monarchists. On the other hand, commoners are treated as equals and not servants; some have titles and rule alongside the sidhe as landed *huskarls*, trusted bondsfae. No wonder things work out so well.

The Middle East — The Caliphate of Cedars (the Levant), the Sultanate of Hejaz (the Arabian Peninsula) and the Empire of the Caucasus (Turkey and the Caspian Sea basin) are the three largest political units of this region. Few Kithain of the west have traveled to these exotic realms, but many eshu speak of the beauty of the crafts, architecture and land. Satyrs and pooka have told of warm welcomes and bountiful hospitality to commoner and noble alike.

Africa — Ancient legends tell of wondrous empires in Mali and Ghana, where the streets were paved with gold. Today, the majestic beauty of the savannas, lakes and waterfalls inspires all Kithain who come here. Most changelings who visit these lands find their own kind wandering and walking, though fae kingdoms with ties to the Sultanate of Hijaz do exist in the north (Aglabib) and the northeast (Nubia). Naturally, eshu are numerous here, but they share the land with many pooka and have some ties to Prodigal shapeshifters. No stories of commoner-noble conflicts find their way to Concordia, but the truth is that much of Africa remains secret from the outside world.

The Far East — Little if anything is known about the presence of changelings in Asia; if nobles and commoners live here is anyone's guess. Most Western fae have heard rumors of strange shapechanging creatures with unusual powers, but whether these are Kithain, Gallain or Prodigals remains unknown.

Australia and New Zealand — The Land Down Under and New Zealand are known to Kithain as the Isles of the Wandering Dream. For such a vast land, the population is relatively spare. Major duchies are located in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, and these cities are the centers of fae activity. Though these lands had their share of troubles between sidhe and commoner in the Resurgence, most old grudges have been settled.

South America — Most fae in Concordia and Europe have heard dire warnings about this continent, whether from the Prodigal Garou or mortal allies. A force dwells here that stifles the joy of the Dreaming, and Kithain generally avoid the place, and some worry about any Nunnehi that may be in harm's way.



CHAPTER TWO: NATURAL ORDERS

True patriotism doesn't exclude an understanding of the patriotism of others.

— Queen Elizabeth II

Kithain social customs and political structures are a double-edged sword for commoners. On one hand, the strict hierarchies of fae feudalism are reminiscent of a glorious past; something stirs within a commoner's soul when she swears fealty to a noble lord in an elaborate ceremony or witnesses the bounty of a well-kept noble freehold. Such social edifices protect all changelings from the Banality of the modern world, and for this reason, feudalism is a logical choice of government for the Kithain.

On the other hand, the fae now populating the mortal lands are *changelings*. While potent and magical, they are not the unchecked faeries of old who could change reality with a thought and a song. Changelings have to interact with human society to survive; for a Kithain to ignore the mortal side of his nature is wrong. Thus, changelings have to cope with the political realities that have come about through dealing with mortals. After the *sidhe's* departure in the Shattering, a lot of newfangled ideas became all the rage, such as government by and for the people, proportional representation and universal suffrage. Perhaps these concepts are still alien to some commoners, but more and more of the common kith are beginning to think about what freedom truly means. Certainly it connotes added personal responsibility and a lack of *carte blanche* protection from a feudal overlord, and sometimes these burdens are too heavy for a beleaguered fae to bear. A commoner who has to worry about Banality and wayward chimera might find it easier to participate in a feudal system that guarantees safeguard against such dangers. Those commoners who do advocate an end to fae feudalism point

out that such worries are minor in comparison to the glories of freedom without the chafing yoke of feudal hierarchies. Such political ruminations are not as much a debate between Seelie and Unseelie as between a love for tradition and a need for modern practicality. Most fae desire both.

Tenets of Fae Feudalism

Fealty is neither taken nor given lightly.

Lords and ladies must protect those who swear fealty to them.

Fae who swear fealty to a lord or lady owe that noble allegiance and obedience.

A fae's word or oath is binding with the force of the Dreaming.

All of this political talk was relatively theoretical, material for a good discussion over drinks down at the local commoner freehold and pub, until the disappearance of High King David. Whether by personal magnetism, the power of Caliburn or sheer wits, David managed to keep the peace between commoners and nobles. True, his system of government was traditional fae feudalism, but thanks to inclusion of commoners in the Parliament of Dreams and granting a fair number of titles to commoners, it worked relatively well. Now, the threads that bound Concordia's peace are straining; some have already snapped. Will

High Queen Faerilyth take matters in hand before hostilities between noble and commoner erupt? What of other monarchs and leaders, such as the Regent Morwen, Princess Lenore or General Lyros? Only the future can answer.

This chapter details political and social realities of commoner life, from the Escheat to Courts, secret societies and dealings with other supernatural beings. Voices of commoners on all points of the political spectrum also illustrate the complexity of various issues. Of course not every outlook or secret society will be ideal for every chronicle; Storytellers and players alike should pick and choose among all the material here to enhance their commoner stories and characters as they see fit.

From Gloria's Journal:

It's so confusing. Everything seemed so clear cut before: We loved and cared for the commoners, and they in turn respected us and the old ways. Sure, there were exceptions; I've known some wonderful commoners who completely deserved their titles, just like I've met a few nobles that had no more sense than a ball of play-dough. And yes, I've slummed with a commoner or two in my time. But were we patronizing them? Didn't we count them less than ourselves? Isn't it like that stupid old line, "I don't mind if my daughter dates a redcap, I just don't want her to marry him?" I'm ashamed to admit I never really noticed what happened to anybody I left in bed the next morning. I've heard lots of nobles snickering at some poor pooka whose clothes were mismatched. Weren't we being needlessly cruel? Isn't that Banal in its own way? We know so little of what harm a single word can wreak.

The Escheat

It ain't no sin if you crack a few laws now and then, just so long as you don't break any.

— Mae West

The Escheat is a set of rules and rights that forms the basis for Kithain society and politics. Depending on a fae's political outlook, he may follow these codes to the letter or bend and adapt them to suit his needs. A commoner's Court, kith and station will affect how he views the Escheat. Trolls and boggans tend to be among the most letter-of-the-law fae, while many pooka, redcaps and sluagh bend rules almost to the breaking point. With satyrs, eshu and nockers, outlook is really impossible to predict.

The Right of Demesne —

The lord or lady who oversees the domain has the right to set and enforce laws there. By the same token, they should respect their vassals and be gracious hosts. Likewise, they should not set down rules that are impossible to follow. Commoners are obligated to follow the laws of the demesne, particularly if they owe fealty to the fief's lord or lady.

Reality:

Some nobles run their freeholds like armed camps and punish the slightest disobedience. Faced with these attitudes, many com-



moners find new places to dwell; occasionally, they stage protests. Many commoners can't understand the absolutism nobles enact in their domains. It's a hard choice for a moderate commoner to make when faced with a staunchly Traditionalist noble on one side and the Banality of the outside world on the other.

The Right to Dream —

Inspiring creativity and dreams among mortals is honorable, but stifling their imaginations or taking Glamour by force is a crime. Flooding them with too much inspiration is an equally foul practice. Commoners closest to mortals consider the Right to Dream the most important rule of the Escheat.

Reality:

Like their noble counterparts, Seelie commoners refrain from ever stealing Glamour from a mortal, except, perhaps, when the need is so great that many mortals and fae will die without it. Some rumors floating about speak of trolls who refuse to take Glamour from a mortal, even at the cost of their own lives. The Unseelie commoners, again like their sidhe brethren, don't have compunctions about taking Glamour in time of need. Maybe they feel a slight guilt, having a stronger connection to humans than the Shining Host, but then again, maybe not.

The Right of Ignorance —

No fae should reveal the Dreaming to mortals, for they are a force of Banality. They will seek out and destroy the Kithain and our places of power through innocent curiosity as well as malevolent hunts for our knowledge. The more humans know, the less Glamour there will be to sustain us.

Reality:

Seelie and Unseelie commoners alike agree on this: Do not reveal knowledge of the Kithain to humans. Punish those who do and make sure all traces of fae presence have been removed from the mortals' minds. The only possible exception to this rule are the Kinain, humans who have fae blood in their veins. Many times they can be staunch allies. Commoners, unlike the sidhe, don't find anything degrading about sharing kinship with humans; it was a means of survival and has led to many good times through the years.

The Right of Rescue —

All Kithain have the right to expect rescue should they fall into Banality. The loss of even one fae is a blow to changelings everywhere. To save a fellow fae is to save a portion of the Dreaming itself.

Reality:

Commoners abide by this rule to the letter, Seelie and Unseelie alike. The bond between commoners is strong, past all differences of Court and kith, in the face of Banality. They'll generally ignore danger to save someone from the terrible fate of Forgetting. This right also extends to beloved personal chimera or chimerical creatures. The one instance where the Right of Rescue gets blurry is in regards to newly arrived sidhe from Arcadia. Most Seelie commoners gladly welcome the newcomers; many Unseelie do so as well, if a bit gruffly. However, members of radical antimonarchist groups, such as the Ranters, often hold important sidhe arrivals as prisoners in exchange for ransom. The very worst kill these newcomers; fortunately, this is a rare event.

Commoners and the Escheat

On Demesne:

Do we honor the wishes of a master or mistress of a freehold? Yes, to a degree. Thank them for their hospitality. Abide by their laws. But leave quickly if you find it a place that discourages free thinking and polite expression of opinion. Rules of respect worth both ways.

— Kabali, Seelie eshu minstrel

On Dreaming:

Sure, I've taken a dab of Glamour here and there from a mortal. So what? I had my reasons, pretty good ones considering one of my chums was bleedin' to death. You wanna make something of it? You gonna spank me, fatty boggan? Sounds like fun.

— Tathy Gams, Unseelie redcap hacker

On Ignorance:

Secrets are quite important, my dear, and while keeping them from mortals is difficult, it is necessary for our protection and theirs. Have you not heard of the sidhe who kill enchanted mortals, lest their memories of us remain intact? No? Perhaps you are not listening, then.

— Pierre Chazell, Seelie sluagh entomologist

On Rescue:

No shit, there we were, glass beakers flying, frogs everywhere, mice gettin' squashed underfoot. Hey, don't turn so green! It was great fun. Sure, things were Banal and nasty, but it was worth it to see poor Soren so happy to see us. I'll never forget how glad he was to get out of there.

— Annalise Torgsdottir, Unseelie troll cop

On Safe Haven:

Am I bitter? Damn right I am! *There's too many people here*, she said, in that sickly sweet voice of hers. *The Balfire will wane and we can't have that now, can we?* I swear, she treated me like I was an ignorant kid. Do you see this scar? It's from the Accordance War. I only fought for one day, but hell, I was there just the same. And then to be denied safety in a freehold with a pair of gorehounds after us. Stuck-up bitch.

— Brian Saven, Seelie nocker gunsmith

On Life:

Have you ever heard a sidhe beg for mercy, boggan? No, I can see you haven't. They moan and cry, terror striking them a thousandfold when the cold iron touches their thin necks. I wonder how many nobles felt pity on the Night of Iron Knives. Did they turn aside their blades? Did they protest the terrible wrong of it all? If so, we have no record of it, just the silence of the dead. I reward my victims with the same.

— Martinet, Unseelie pooka, supposed member of the Ranters

The Right of Safe Haven —

All places of the Dreaming are sacred and must be protected. Likewise, beings such as fae and chimera should be given succor and shelter when they require it. No one should be turned away and left to face Banality alone.

Reality:

Commoners have always welcomed their fellow changelings, no matter what Court or kith. They consider this extremely important as some nobles have turned commoners away in the past; while they may want to say turnabout is fair play, commoners are too concerned for the Dreaming to do so. Some Unseelie may put desperate nobles through a lot of taunting, but they will eventually open the doors of the freehold and let the sidhe inside.

The Right of Life —

No Kithain shall spill the lifeblood of another Kithain. Death is anathema and steals life from the Dreaming itself. To die in honorable combat with chimerical weapons is acceptable, provided the one slain will be reawakened with Glamour.

Reality:

While the vast majority of commoners firmly uphold this law, others consider it a hypocritical machination of the sidhe. After all, weren't the Shining Host the ones responsible for the Night of Iron Knives? More brutal and cynical commoners, largely Unseelie, note that the sidhe are quick enough to make laws that protect their own skins but have little regard for those of the commoners.

Social and Political Structures

As we ascend the social ladder, viciousness wears a thicker mask.
— Erich Fromm

In many ways, the society and politics of commoners mirrors that of the sidhe. Both groups have Courts and seemings. Sidhe have their Traditionalists, Reformers and Modernists while commoners are conservatives, moderates and radicals. As the years have passed, though, many of the common kith have come to enjoy their own distinct social groups and identities apart from the sidhe. Many celebrate holidays geared towards commoner interests; after all, they lived here for over six centuries without the presence of the Shining Host. When the sidhe returned, most were tolerant of these commoner affectations, though a few nobles thought the commoner upstarts needed a good drubbing. Presently, most nobles continue to respect the interests of their subjects, at least in public. Behind closed doors, their reactions range from laughter at the boggan bake sales on May Day to real concern about the harsh rhetoric of some radicals. What's been amusement or feigned disinterest in the past may bubble into something more violent as nobles cope with the disappearance of High King David and the muddle left behind.

Seemings

From Lauren McCrae, boggan legal adviser:

You're really too young to understand much of this, just barely into your wild years, but commoners have a long outlook

on seemings. With each progression of age, there are certain behaviors and responsibilities that must be learned. If childlings don't learn to respect their elders, they turn into a bunch of spoiled brats. If wilders don't kick up their heels a bit, they're bitter when their golden years hit them. Ah, well, I can see you're confused. I probably should set about explaining it a little better.

Childlings

First of all, let me assure you that learning can be as fun as any game. The childling years are for training, education and practice, but that doesn't mean a bunch of dreary lessons. We boggans especially believe that the young ones should learn from life. That means working in the kitchen, planting seeds in the garden or helping the knight polish his sword. So tell me, what child doesn't like to help make a batch of chocolate chip cookies, then eat them hot from the oven? Haven't you ever planted beans in a drink cup, watering and watching over them until they sprout? See, the important thing is that we mature changelings take childlings under our wings, nurture them and show them the Kithain way by our actions; this is what fostering is all about. With good mentors, they grow up to keep the Dreaming alive. I admit it's hard, though, to find the right balance between learning and fun. Remember, childlings are closest to Glamour and the Dreaming, and both great wonder and big trouble come from these little ones. Who do you think makes most of the random and stray chimera we see? Yes, the childlings! Every child has nightmares, but what fae, kid or adult, wants to face a living nightmare? See why it's so important for us to treat childlings well but with a firm hand? Unhappy kids have bad dreams, and that's a problem for everyone.

Another difficulty with childlings is that most still have mortal parents. More and more fae mentors are learning tricks to get the kids away at least for a while; they masquerade as piano teachers, dance instructors or coaches. These deceptions get the little darlings away from their oft-Banal homes long enough to let them keep their charm and learn about being Kithain. But there's still lots of trouble when the childlings prefer the company of their fae mentors over their own parents. Sometimes the young ones run away to freeholds, which on more than one occasion has led the authorities and worse straight to the fae. But I'm getting away from the official process here.

At a time deemed appropriate by the mentor, the local noble and usually the court sorcerer, the fledge presents himself and is given his True Name; this ritual is called Saining and marks the entrance of the changeling into formal Kithain society. Before Saining, many kith have childlings undergo the Fior Reigh, a test of courage, wits and artistry. It used to be for nobles only, but that seems to be slipping by the wayside. As you may know, it really depends on the kith as to what form the Fior Reigh takes. Artistry to you or me might mean designing an elaborate herb garden, but to a redcap, it could be carving the grossest tattoo imaginable. Usually the mentor and her trusted friends come up with the tests, often with the blessing of the local noble. While the Fior Reigh is more or less optional for us commoners, it's terrible luck for any changeling not to undergo a Saining. Most slip into Bedlam...or worse.



By the way, I should mention that fostering has nothing to do with Court. Seelie though I may be, I understand that we all have Unseelie sides to our natures. We'd be denying tradition if we didn't teach the young ones about our more chaotic tendencies. It's true that like follows like and that I've had mostly Seelie fledges in my lifetime. But I'd never turn away an Unseelie childling in need, no way.

Even after a childling undergoes her Saining, she often remains near her mentor for some years. The truer separation is the Togail an Ainm, which is a sort of birthday that marks passage to her wilder seeming. A similar affair comes when the wilder becomes a grump, too, though it's not nearly as joyous an occasion. On Wilder-day, there's usually a ceremony with friends and family, even mortals. Then, the party begins, and it lasts for years while the fae enjoys the most exciting time of her life. (For more information on both Saining and the Togail an Ainm, see **The Enchanted**.)

Wilders

Looking back with the eyes of a grump, I think wilders need to treasure their salad days, and seems to me you're the living example of how wilders should let their hair down. Look at you, running all over creation collecting stories and living it up.

Well, that's more or less how it should be. I know you believe I'm pretty stodgy, but in my heyday, I cut loose more than a time or two. What's the use of being young and fancy free if you don't do something about it? Life is too short, even for our kind, to not have some fun while the sun shines. Get all the hijinks out of your system while you're a wilder, because life will surely get more sedate and responsible as you get older.

Most Kithain are wilders, and these years are the time for quests, politics, war and romance, not necessarily in that order. I put quests first because after the initial Togail an Ainm, marking the advance from childling to wilder, many Kithain take on lengthy searches and missions. In part, sure, this is to see the world and have a good time. But another reason is that quests and all that comes with them help fend off Banality and renew a fae's stirring of Glamour. Most of the great commoner heroes you hear about were wilders; this is a time in life when both body and mind are sharp.

Wilders are notorious flirts; I don't care what kith you're looking at! Notice I'm talking about romance here and *not* marriage; that's for later. Some wilders have a love 'em and leave 'em attitude; look at those Fiona sidhe, and you'll see what I mean. Commoners, excepting the satyrs, are a little more sedate. Their ideas of romantic fun and games are things like kissing

parties and exchanging cloved fruit. Many trolls will take on a quest for a loved one, that being their ultimate proof of affection. Ever seen a courting eshu? Now there's a lovely sight: goodies from all over, plus beautiful poetry and love stories to boot! Another custom, probably borrowed from the sidhe, is the betrothal. This usually lasts a year and a day, and for that time, the couple tends to be faithful to one another. After 366 days, they can renew the vow for another year and a day, split up or make it permanent. The latter, though, seldom happens until later in life.

The wilder years are also when many commoners get involved in politics. Take folks like Dewey St. John Flanders, Vlad Rogvodov and even that crazed German nocker, Ragnild von Folkke. They're all wilders and didn't get involved in the Parliament of Dreams or in running a revolution until they were no longer childlings. It takes a little know how and the ability to heft your voice above a squeak to have real political influence.

Yes, all in all, I'd say that most changelings run headlong towards their wilder years and fight tooth and nail to stay that way. Too bad; there's a lot to be said for some pleasures of old age, y'know.

Grumps

There's a time for everything, and after a long summer of wilderhood, most commoners agree it's time to settle down. As the oldest members of Kithain society, it's our duty at this point in our lives to pass wisdom on to the next generation. Rearing young changelings is terribly bittersweet; it's a time for nostalgia and looking backwards because it's damn scary to look ahead. The childlings *are* our future, and we must be responsible for ensuring they can carry on after we're gone. Nobody likes to talk about growing older, but it's better to plan ahead and make sure you've left behind some kind of legacy, whether it's a master work or a well-mannered childling. That's why fostering is so important to grumps. Any changelings who shirk this duty, well, there's something not right with their thinking.

The Togail an Ainm marking the progress from wilder to grump is a solemn occasion but also a time for celebrating the many accomplishments of the guest of honor. Some wilders resist this with all their might, and it usually takes a word or two from their motley to get them on the right path. At the celebration, it's not unknown for a noble to grant a substantive boon to the new grump, in honor of the day.

And yes, there are many joys still to be had. Wilders balk at marriage, children and settling down; grumps rejoice in these things. I don't suppose you understand the pleasures of watching your children grow up or coming home to a family. No? Well, mark my words; one day you will. Children help us remember the delights of our own childling years and bring back a little of what we lose.

The reason why so many grumps fear getting old is this: we begin to Forget. This is far worse than death, which really isn't so much to be feared. After all, with death eventually comes rebirth. No, Forgetting is much more painful. It's a slow descent into mundanity and Banality, a departure from Glamour and magic. It's perhaps harder, I think, to watch someone you love sink into Forgetfulness



than to experience it yourself. Some grumps, particularly trolls, go on a last desperate quest; they like to die digging their axes into the hide of some murderous chimera or mythical beast in the Dreaming. You've heard how satyrs have one last big party before they end it all. Some other kith have similar traditions: eshu walking out into the sands of a great desert, boggans literally drowning themselves in food and drink one last time, nockers locking themselves in their workshops for a final night with their creations and so on. Sometimes it's better to end a cycle of life on an upbeat note rather than simply watch it slip away.

When a commoner dies, it's not quite the horror as when one of the Shining Host passes. Like I said earlier, we know that we'll come back one day, even if we don't know where we end up in between one life and another. So commoners often have elaborate wakes instead of somber funerals, where no expense is spared on the best refreshments and entertainment. I've been to several and rest assured, a good time is had by all. It's an occasion for both remembering the past and, dare I say it, considering one's own eventual demise. But let's hope that's a while off for you and me both!

COURTS

From Phineas Todd, pooka florist:

The vast majority of commoners are conservative in their outlooks, so it makes sense that Seelie outnumber Unseelie by a bit. Trolls, boggans and pooka are often Seelie while redcaps are almost always Unseelie. With satyrs, nockers, eshu and sluagh, it just depends. The funny thing about encountering an Unseelie troll, boggan or pooka is that they tend to be exceptionally nasty. Why? Maybe it's because they're normally so noble, dedicated or wonderfully cute like me, depending on the kith, that when the Unseelie side takes over, these folks make up for lost time. What you may find interesting is that it's the most conservative of all the commoner kith who advocate equal splits between Courts. Some flip-flop at the seasonal changes of Beltaine and Samhain, others whenever they feel the time is right. You *have* been Unseelie at least once in your life, haven't you?

The Seelie Code

What can I say that you haven't heard before? The Seelie do like their honor, and all that goes with it, like justice, mercy, truth, apple pie and hot dogs. Conservative and even many moderate commoners roll in this stuff. I don't disagree that it's important to fight against Banality and preserve Glamour, of course. But when some Seelie pass, they want you to think they're clad in angel wings. Yaaaaawn.

Death before dishonor.

Helloooo! We aren't samurai, so I don't know where they get this whole suicidal thing. Whatever happened to a good old apology? Trolls are serious as a heart attack about this, too. Many of the other Seelie kith don't take it quite so literally, though some accept exile in place of death.

Love conquers all.

Love, schmove. Some wuss from House Fiona must've invented this one and the Seelie caught the bug. There's no such

thing as true love, and that whole courtly love nonsense is a big waste of time. I know love is part of the Dreaming and all that, but even most Seelie don't have the courage needed to offer pure, selfless love. If you see it, remember it's rare indeed.

Beauty is life.

Sure, I like pretty things. Who doesn't? But there's more to life than *that*. What about danger? When you stare death in the face and come away laughing and whole, then you know what living is all about. That's what the Seelie are missing about the big picture.

Never forget a debt.

True, it's not much fun to owe somebody, and the larger the debt, the greater the nuisance. But rather than break your back trying to pay the person off, why not see to it they owe you something? Even the score. Or if you're really clever, make sure the rube is Seelie and owes you a bigger debt than the one he held over you. They take this debt stuff to heart.

The Unseelie Code

Okay, boggan girl, you should've figured out by now that I belong to the Unseelie Court. So it's up to me to set you straight on a few things.

Change is good.

Stagnation is Banal, so why not shake up the status quo? This is the main problem we commoners have to cope with if we're ever going to get anywhere and accomplish something. The conservatives haven't a friggin' clue about how much their stone-clad ways hold all the commoners back.

Glamour is free.

Look around you! Everywhere mortals are making Glamour, and we're just letting it slip away while we age and lose ourselves. Besides, they're mortals, and taking Glamour from them seems like a pretty natural thing to me. I know this probably disgusts the Seelie commoners, but why should we let it go to waste?

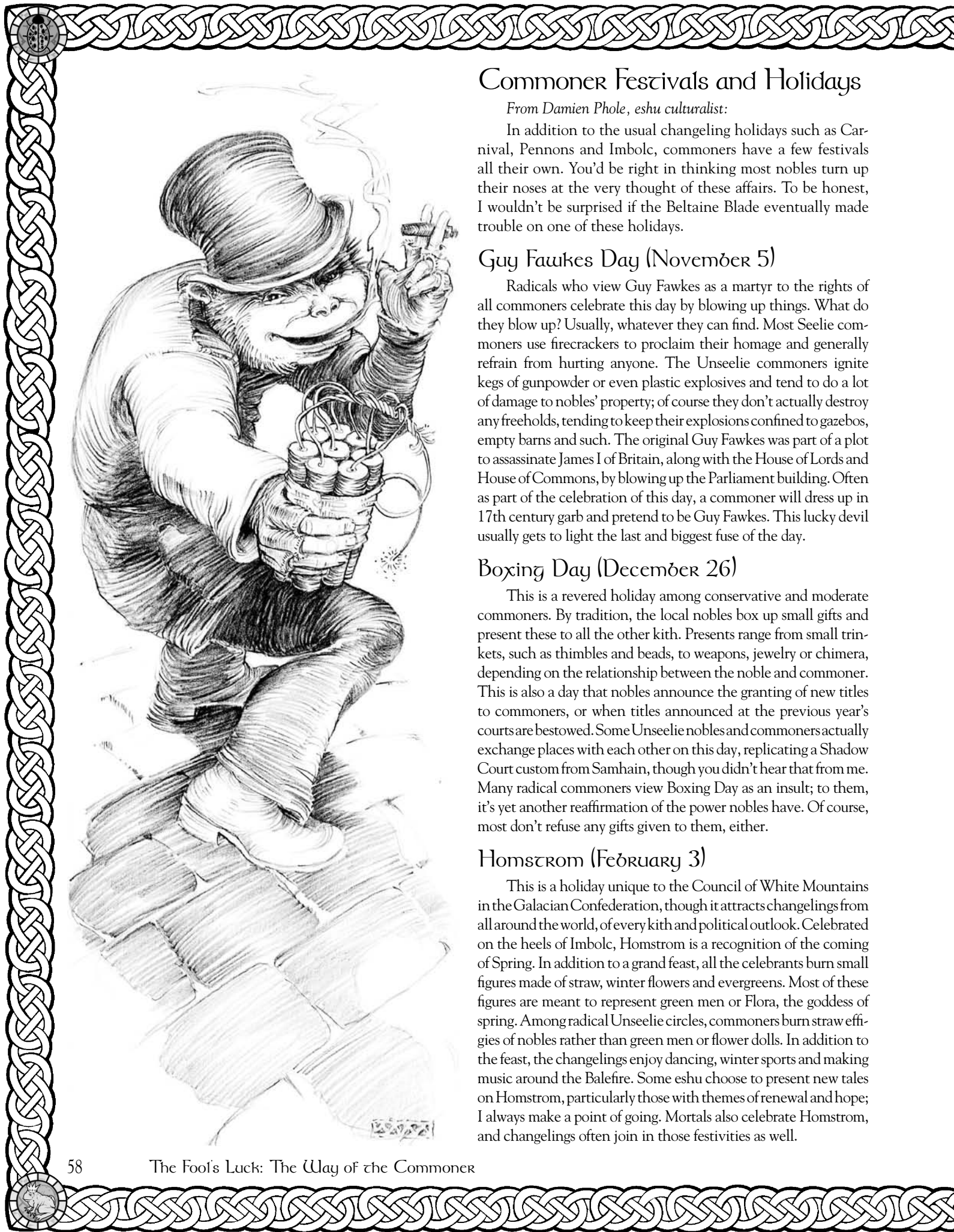
Honor is a lie.

Tell me, who's going to give a damn if you have tons of honor once you're dead? Honor has no place in this modern society; it's not honor, but the law of the jungle, survival, that we need to follow. Honor is a meaningless trapping, one that the sidhe have convinced most Seelie commoners is vital to the fae way of life. I say poppycock to that!

Passion before duty.

We commoners are much luckier than the sidhe; at least if we die, we're pretty certain to come back. But there's a big difference between pretty certain and 100% sure. So my advice is to forget all the millions of responsibilities and commitments you've got lined up for the next few months. Kick off your shoes, drop your knickers and have a good time. Love may be false, but I didn't say anything about passion, did I?

Wait a minute, why am I saying this all this stuff? You didn't give me any magic carrot tarts, did you? Listen, if someone reads this, they'd think I was one of those Unseelie kooks or something! And I assure you, mademoiselle boggan, I am of the Seelie Court.



Commoner Festivals and Holidays

From Damien Phole, eshu culturalist:

In addition to the usual changeling holidays such as Carnival, Pennons and Imbolc, commoners have a few festivals all their own. You'd be right in thinking most nobles turn up their noses at the very thought of these affairs. To be honest, I wouldn't be surprised if the Beltaine Blade eventually made trouble on one of these holidays.

Guy Fawkes Day (November 5)

Radicals who view Guy Fawkes as a martyr to the rights of all commoners celebrate this day by blowing up things. What do they blow up? Usually, whatever they can find. Most Seelie commoners use firecrackers to proclaim their homage and generally refrain from hurting anyone. The Unseelie commoners ignite kegs of gunpowder or even plastic explosives and tend to do a lot of damage to nobles' property; of course they don't actually destroy any freeholds, tending to keep their explosions confined to gazebos, empty barns and such. The original Guy Fawkes was part of a plot to assassinate James I of Britain, along with the House of Lords and House of Commons, by blowing up the Parliament building. Often as part of the celebration of this day, a commoner will dress up in 17th century garb and pretend to be Guy Fawkes. This lucky devil usually gets to light the last and biggest fuse of the day.

Boxing Day (December 26)

This is a revered holiday among conservative and moderate commoners. By tradition, the local nobles box up small gifts and present these to all the other kith. Presents range from small trinkets, such as thimbles and beads, to weapons, jewelry or chimera, depending on the relationship between the noble and commoner. This is also a day that nobles announce the granting of new titles to commoners, or when titles announced at the previous year's courts are bestowed. Some Unseelie nobles and commoners actually exchange places with each other on this day, replicating a Shadow Court custom from Samhain, though you didn't hear that from me. Many radical commoners view Boxing Day as an insult; to them, it's yet another reaffirmation of the power nobles have. Of course, most don't refuse any gifts given to them, either.

Homstrom (February 3)

This is a holiday unique to the Council of White Mountains in the Galacian Confederation, though it attracts changelings from all around the world, of every kith and political outlook. Celebrated on the heels of Imbolc, Homstrom is a recognition of the coming of Spring. In addition to a grand feast, all the celebrants burn small figures made of straw, winter flowers and evergreens. Most of these figures are meant to represent green men or Flora, the goddess of spring. Among radical Unseelie circles, commoners burn straw effigies of nobles rather than green men or flower dolls. In addition to the feast, the changelings enjoy dancing, winter sports and making music around the Balefire. Some eshu choose to present new tales on Homstrom, particularly those with themes of renewal and hope; I always make a point of going. Mortals also celebrate Homstrom, and changelings often join in those festivities as well.

May Day (May 1)

May Day marks a celebration dedicated to the laboring commoners of the world; it is especially enjoyed by nockers and boggans. In 1889, the Second International, a group of Labour and socialist party members, held their first congress on May Day. Mortals who worked for a living marked May 1st as special, and many commoners began to follow suit. However, rather than take time off to rest, nockers and boggans often use this day to showcase their best skills. Do you cook, or is that a stupid question? The reason I ask is that boggans have baking competitions, while nockers trot out their newest inventions. It's more like a county fair than a political statement, and plenty of other Kithain always show up to check out the grub and toys. A huge parade and a feast where everyone can eat until they burst marks the end of the day. I think you'd love it.

Nizhniy Novgorod (August)

Named for an old Russian fair from the 19th century as well as the closest town, this festival is a celebration with an East meets West theme. Essentially, it's a World's Fair for changelings, with hundreds of booths, craft exhibits and clandestine meetings. If any western Kithain have a hope of glimpsing one of the elusive Shinma of China outside their eastern homelands, it's at this festival. Nizhniy Novgorod lasts for about a week and is scheduled a year in advance for some seven-day period during the first fortnight in August. Usually, it's set just after Lughnasad, and partygoers often show up still merry from that celebration. At Nizhniy Novgorod, visitors will find an endless supply of merchants, exotic foods and prime entertainment. The nearby town rests at the juncture of the Oka and Volga rivers; while a strong industrial base, it's also rich in libraries and the arts. Some changelings choose to make journeys down the rivers after the festival concludes.

Party Lines

From Marina of Beacon Hills, satyr bard and scholar:

Commoner politics are fairly straightforward and much less murky than human ones. We have three key political viewpoints, and practically all commoners adopt one of these. As with many mortals and sidhe, we also tend to move in a circle through these viewpoints during our lives. Very young commoners see fae society in clear shades of black and white; they haven't lived long enough to understand the shades of gray and generally prefer to rely on long-standing tradition. For example, Mimieux, an eshu childling I once knew, may not understand why the other eshu find her kind friend Sir Acheron of House Eiluned a real bother; all she knows is that they get uncomfortable when he comes around. So the childling follows the lead of her elders and gradually pulls away from the sidhe's possibly genuine affections. As the childling becomes a wilder, she takes more risks. Perhaps she thinks she can use Sir Acheron and thus renews the acquaintance; maybe she even tries to lecture him on how he should be more sensitive to the needs of commoners. As Mimieux becomes a grump, she probably will either give up trying to change the knight and accept him as he is or withdraw back into the company of her own kith and kind. The eshu

The Declaration of Sovereignty

Excerpt from an interview with Ligeia, a sluagh who owns a spooky lodge known as the Mansion, in Baltimore:

More tea, my dear? You are a polite one. Refreshing. Well, as I was saying, a gift can be a curse, can it not? Very well, here is a gift to you.

In the early weeks of January, 1970, a number of commoner leaders gathered in secret to discuss their situation. They realized the sidhe problem would not go away, you see, and unless they acted soon, one side or the other would be provoked into wide scale violence. One among them, Rikard Grifgare, looked to the past and suggested that a Manifesto, a Declaration which set forth the beliefs and resolve of the commoners, would unite them all under one cause, and that such a document, backed by the Dreaming, could not be ignored. The others seized upon the idea.

Unfortunately, agreeing to the principle and agreeing on the wording were two entirely different things. Though based on the principles laid out by the American Declaration of Independence, it was by necessity tailored to a different political and magical reality. Some members complained that the document wasn't detailed enough, that it didn't guarantee the right of the commoners to keep their freeholds as well as their freedom. Others replied that the Declaration was only an announcement of basic principles, not a framework for a peace treaty or governmental instrument. Muhtadi the Scribe sighed and picked up his pen again.

After much debate, the second draft was drawn up, but few liked it more than the first version.

Some of the greatest Kithain alive were in that hall, arguing, haranguing and cajoling. It would have been magnificent to hear William Tenbar trying to convince Izazkun Nikar of, well, of anything; or Rikard trying to make Talibin be silent for one minute.

Just when Muhtadi was ready to begin the third draft, word reached the assemblage that the sidhe wished to make an accord. Rikard begged them to finish the work at hand, but most seemed to think it was unnecessary — had the sidhe not come to their senses? A few felt that the Declaration would only antagonize the sidhe who had just held out an olive branch.

Of course, we all know what happened. What nobody seems to know is what happened to the drafted manuscripts, which disappeared after the meeting. They simply vanished.

Antiroyalists would dearly love to get their hands on the drafts, in hopes of using them as their authors intended. Nobles likewise would love to have them, to see them burned. If this were common knowledge, can you imagine the desperate hunt that would take place? I suppose it's fortunate that so very few know of their existence. Of course, you know now, don't you? A gift and a curse.

has lived as a conservative, cautious childhood, a risk-taking radical youth and a moderate or conservative grump. Of course, that's the broad angle. Some commoners stay with one view all their lives, entering grumpdom as the stalwart conservative or firebrand rebel they've been since their Chrysalis.

Conservatives

Conservatives emphasize tradition, history and long-standing customs. They look to the distant past for guidance on behavior and values; after all, if it was good enough for the Kithain of long ago, it's good enough for them today, too. Conservatives believe that while a just government is important, its primary job is to help the people live a good life. If such government is a monarchy with all of the power in the hands of the king or queen, so be it. On the other hand, government is only one tool for making sure life is good; the rest of the responsibility lies with individuals. Therefore, say conservatives, rights are a privilege to be earned by each and every changeling through fulfilling their duties. Those who don't perform their duties haven't earned their rights, such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Conservatives also are staunch supporters of having distinct social classes and have no difficulty at all with the division between nobles and peasants. Their theory is that hardworking commoners will receive rewards for fulfillment of their duties; these may or may not include titles, wealth and status. If the rewards aren't forthcoming, well, that just means more elbow grease is required. Not surprisingly, a number of trolls and boggans are conservatives, as are many grumps. After all, they worked hard, so why shouldn't everyone else? Conservatives are currently the majority among commoners, probably half of the entire population.

Moderates

I'm a moderate, and I admit it freely. Moderates are commoner Pollyannas; we try to see the good on all sides of the political debate. Like conservatives, we believe duty and the hard work of the individual are important; however, we also realize that the late 20th century is vastly different from the 12th century. Most of us, myself included, believe that the fae version of feudalism works very well, except that not only sidhe but deserving commoners should also be allowed to sit at the top of the pack. I've seen wise trolls and stupid sidhe yet guess who's the king and who's the servant. Moderates want to enact reforms and changes to the Kithain status quo rationally and precisely. We feel that gradual changes which are pleasing to most people will last longer and have a better chance of maintaining the peace. Right now, I'd say moderates are the larger minority among the commoners, about 35% of the total population.

Radicals

Radicals, much like the Unseelie Court, believe that change is good. They want to seek out the injustices of economics, politics and society and sweep those inequities away. Some radicals believe the way to accomplish this is through gradual reform, using legislation and the Parliament of Dreams to improve the lives of commoners. Others think that the changes should take

Sidhe Political Impulses and Commoner Politics

Why do the sidhe have Traditionalists, Reformers and Modernists, while the commoners use words like conservative, moderate and radical? Aren't they mirrors of each other? Don't some commoners use the sidhe terms to refer to themselves? Well, yes to all the above...with some caveats.

It's certainly true that some of the older commoners still like to refer to themselves in sidhe terms, as Traditionalists, Reformers or Modernists. But among the younger and trendier commoners is a growing movement that advocates commoners choosing their *own* words to describe their politics. Using sidhe terms is just another way of coming under the thumb of the Shining Host. Many groups throughout history have done this, seizing on a word to describe themselves rather than using the term an enemy or oppressor prefers. Maybe commoners don't feel quite so negatively about the sidhe, but many still like using their own frame of reference.

Think of politics like a number line. Put sidhe Traditionalists on the far right and commoner radicals on the far left. Starting just left of the Traditionalists and continuing to move left, add commoner conservatives, sidhe Reformers, commoner moderates and sidhe Modernists. Regardless of how modern their thinking may be, ninety-nine percent of the time, sidhe are still going to be a little more to the right than a commoner radical. Of course the number line is just a model. Many commoners are going to fluctuate depending on the issue and their mood at the time.

place swiftly; they assert that there's not time enough to lobby and rally for the nobles to change their ancient ways. In fact, some extremist radicals say that the sidhe will never change without some sort of large-scale revolution. They point to the Galacian Confederation, little realizing the bloodshed, violence and compromise necessary for those commoners to establish their government. Still more radicals shy away from big-time politics and work on a grassroots level to improve social conditions for mortals and fae. Radicals are presently the smaller minority among commoners, just 15% of the total population.

The Parliament of Dreams

From The Right Honourable Place: A History of the Parliament of Dreams by Dewey St. John Flanders, satyr:

Though the Accordance War still raged in 1971, High King David saw the need to build hope. He accomplished this through construction of the Parliament of Dreams, a legislative body that would allow representation from all freeholds with over fifteen Kithain. Moreover, he encouraged smaller freeholds to band together to meet this minimum number, thus extending representation far and wide over Concordia. In this fashion, he was eventually able to create what no Kithain

monarch had ever accomplished before, a governing body that was roughly half sidhe and half commoner. Some members of both sides rejected the notion of such a Parliament; after all, it went against the Traditionalists' most cherished notions of the divine right of kings and noblesse oblige. How could the common folk understand the responsibilities of leadership, asked critics. But the High King insisted, and no gesture could have won him more commoner support than this. For this reason and others, David ap Ardry ap Gwydion will forever bear the accolade of "commoners' king."

Presently, the Parliament acts more as a strong advisory council, and the mood of the body is essentially coalitionist. Seldom can any side gain a clear upper hand, as there are many splits between sidhe and commoner, political impulses and commoner political standpoints and of course, Courts. Laws passed are not necessarily binding throughout Concordia, though wise monarchs follow at least the spirit of the law. Some of the most stalwart commoner supporters include the boggans, who comprise about fourteen percent of the Parliament.

Commoners who are politically self-destructive, calling themselves moderates or radicals, lead the main domestic opposition to the Parliament of Dreams. They deny the age-old traditions of allowing a sidhe majority rule and claim that Kithain deserve representation based on the numbers of their kith in Concordia rather than sidhe dominion. What these dissenters fail to realize is the long-standing political expertise the sidhe hold so dear. They fail to see that those who are most skilled, rather by nature or experience, should be the ones in charge. Should these politically inept commoners ever gain an upper hand, the Parliament would surely be in jeopardy of extinction.

*From the pamphlet **Advocates: Pay Heed to the Farce of Courts!** by Vlad Rogvodov, redcap:*

What fools we fae be if we continue to accept the inequalities of the Parliament of Dreams. Fellow Advocates, you can see how warped the very setting of the political body remains, after all these years! A mere 5% of the Unseelie populace holds seats! 'Tis the way the Unseelie prefer it, most Seelie claim. Well, let me assure you, 'tis not so!

You who call yourselves Kithain, pay heed, particularly those among you who love the word tradition: in the ancient past, half of us were Seelie and half Unseelie. Are you ignoring the old ways by refusing to allow the darker side of the year to gain ascendance? More importantly, are you denying the Unseelie fae their equal and rightful chance for having their day in Parliament?

If so, you are silencing half of your own soul.

*From the speech **Concordia's Seeds of Destruction: Parliament of Dreams, Chamber of Horrors** by Ragnild von Folkke, nocker, the Galacian Confederation:*

I have heard tales that the Kithain of Concordia have an assembly called the Parliament of Dreams. In that place, the Shining Host sits in almost half the seats, though they be only a paltry five percent of the populace. Only fifty-eight percent of the seats are reserved for commoners, like you and me, though we represent over ninety-five percent of the Kithain population.

The reasons for this social injustice, so I hear, are many. Chief among them is the belief that sidhe are fit rulers, while commoners are not. Their blood is tainted by humans, the so-called purists claim. Commoners lack the inborn skills needed to be good leaders, declare the monarchists. To all these reasons, I say stuff and nonsense! The power to rule well is not the right of blood, but the melange of wisdom, courage and vision. Such a mix comes through the people choosing the finest among them to lead; only they can decide who will best serve their needs. To paraphrase Benjamin Disraeli, a leader must follow the people *because* he is their leader. One does not need to be tall, fair and violet-eyed to be worthy of such a task.

Secret Societies and Motleys

The words of Gelfand Bruning, troll mercenary:

So you want to know about secret societies, and you come to me of all people? Well, I can't tell you as much as an eshu, but I have been around a lot of courts, battles and freeholds. I've seen quite a bit in my time, so here's what I think. While a few commoners belong to groups that are mostly sidhe, such as the Red Branch Knights, most common kith prefer their own societies and motleys. Like sticks with like, I guess. Here's a few of the commoner groups I've had the pleasure or misery of dealing with over the years. Most of the folks are commoners without title, though some might be knights or baronets.

The Catacomb Club

This "gentlemen's club" is comprised of ennobled commoners, many of whom held power before the Resurgence. They desire to retake their former vaunted positions which were lost upon the return of the sidhe; I say some deserved it and some didn't. Most members of the Catacomb Club prefer sidhe political terms and style themselves as fae equal to the Shining Host, not the brightest move on their part. Unlike the Ranters, though, their chief weapons are the tongue and pen, and we're all the better for it. Polite dissent is one thing; violence is quite another.

(For more information on the Catacomb Club, see **Nobles: The Shining Host**.)

Children's Crusade

This vile bunch of childling redcaps and assorted friends are among the nastiest killers around. They target Seelie nobles in particular and manage to get away with rampant atrocities because of their youth and presumed innocence. I think they're a bunch of mad dogs who should be caught and dispatched on sight. What if other childlings get hold of these ideas?

(The **Shadow Court** gives more details on these young troublemakers.)

Emma's Little Helpers

These ladies, to use the term quite loosely, are a band of redcap terrorists. The Little Helpers have some formidable allies, including some wild Greek-sounding Prodigals called the Black Fury Sisters of Hippolyta. In other words, they aren't your average ladies' sewing circle and terrorist society. Until recently, other fae

were willing to turn a blind eye to the group's occasional atrocities; many times they rescued children in need and gave a hand to women who could use a friend. So that wasn't so bad. As of late, though, their violence has escalated. Instead of knocking a few drunken louts around a bit, they just as often leave their victims gutted, or worse. Where once they scared the crap out of a smartass teenage boy, the Little Helpers now might string him up. The Hellion, newest leader of this unwholesome bunch, might be the cause of all this ultraviolence. Whatever the reason, Emma's Little Helpers were one step away from being declared outlaws when the High King disappeared. Chances are high that they'll continue on their unchecked rampage.

(See **Chapter Five: Names, Faces and Places** for more information on the Hellion.)

The Iron Brigade

Names for their iron-tipped spears and iron-shod boots, this gang of mostly redcaps and trolls, I'm ashamed to say, are the honor guard and soldiers of Duke Toren na Gulan (see **Chapter Five: Names, Faces and Places**). The Duke has whipped this rowdy bunch into a closely-knit band of disciplined warriors. Needless to say, the whole gang is Unseelie in the worst way. Whenever they prowl the roads, their feet make a nasty song, warning others to scatter. Of course being redcaps and some Unseelie trolls, they aren't the brightest kids in the forest. Nor are they particularly adept at stealth. What they can do is fight without rest; they seem never to tire or give up. I've heard they did some terrible things during the Accordance War, such as murdering sidhe prisoners. The best way to escape the Iron Brigade is either to outrun them or somehow pull the wool over their eyes. Every couple of years, the Duke has a recruitment fair to gather replacements for the Iron Brigade. He takes the biggest, strongest and meanest commoners he can find and especially enjoys weeding out slack recruits and spies. Like their master, the Iron Brigade are considered extremely dangerous outlaws, and citizens of Concordia are warned to avoid from them at all cost.

The Low Road

The Low Road is similar in some ways to the Minutemen, but alas, they're a bit more roguish. They too ferret commoners to safety, *outlaw* commoners, I must add. Most of these folks aren't vile criminals; they're usually brawlers, robbers or Unseelie who've stolen too much Glamour from the mortals. Their sentences are usually things like three days in the root cellar, picking up trash around the local noble's freehold or peeling a hundred pounds of potatoes. That's no great feat for you, I'm sure, but think how some sweet young pooka would feel! Anyway, if they get wind of it, the Low Road breezes in and helps the offender escape in a jailbreak. Truth to tell, I don't think they do it to be kind as much as to have a great time. The Low Road are usually armed with chimerical rapiers, dueling pistols and maybe a dab of nitroglycerin. No one's ever gotten hurt, save a few scrapes and scratches. Let's hope they manage to keep their good humor in the days to come. I'd hate to see these folks turn mean and nasty.





Hugin and Munin

Hugin and Munin, named for Odin's ravens "Thought" and "Memory" is a highly secret antimonarchist group. The impending civil war is shaping up to be their bread and butter; it sets a perfect stage for them to topple the upstart sidhe. The group is small at present, comprised of about two dozen members. These radicals take a terrible oath of allegiance to each other, vowing death before treachery. The group has two leaders who inspired the name of the organization: Hugin, a satyr female who apparently suffered some great wrong at the hands of a sidhe, and Munin, a massive old troll who in his heyday was possibly a liegeman to the Shining Host. Their real identities are unknown, but this pair is shrewd and dastardly. Meetings take place once a month in the dark of the moon; invitations are sent via chimerical ravens who drop a feather containing all the pertinent information into the hands of the member. The feather is burned immediately thereafter. Should war begin, planned tactics include training deep cover agents to spy on the opposition, blackmail and even assassination. Hugin and Munin as a whole aren't necessarily Unseelie or members of the Shadow Court; the group is simply determined to slice away the power of the sidhe monarchs at all costs.

The Minutemen

Miss Gloria, I'm about to tell you something that will frighten you, and I'm sorry I have to do that. Mind you, what I'm talking about only happens once in a blue moon, and just among the worst Unseelie at that. All my life I've served and honored the sidhe, and never, ever have I wanted for kindness, friendship and respect.

But every now and then, something ain't quite right about one of the Shining Host. She might start hurting her commoner retainers and turning them away from the Balefire. I even heard tell of one sorceress who used a few commoners in some kind of experiment.

The atrocities got worse until she was a monster. The problem is that a lot of commoners, particularly childlings or the elderly, can't get away. Where would they go? How would they get there? Well, this is when the Minutemen step in. Their job is to check out rumors of sidhe, or ennobled commoners, I might add, who've gone bad. Then, they help get the members of the freehold or motley to safety. Sometimes the oddball sidhe or titled commoner puts up a fight, so the Minutemen have to be well prepared. I've even helped them out a time or two, and it wasn't a pretty thing to watch.

My stars, missy, you've gone white as a sheet. Here, have some mead before I go on.

The Monkey's Paw

This mysterious group of assassins is rumored to include many commoners as well as sidhe of House Scathach. Having fought at those nobles' side, I could see it, though they value honor almost as much as we trolls. No one really knows what the Monkey's Paw agenda is, and of course, a membership roster is not public. Most of the Monkey's Paw is believed to be Unseelie, but I'm not so sure about that.

(Nobles: **The Shining Host** contains additional information on the Monkey's Paw.)

The Order of Bianca

Though the Order of Bianca is technically illegal, most people turn a blind eye to its activities. These rescuers are also said to have good relations with the Order of Eiliethyia (see the **Changeling Players Guide**), occasionally sharing information and resources. While the Order of Bianca does have some noble members, commoners comprise most of the group; at its heart, it is a street-level motley of gallants who rescue any Kithain from the clutches of Banality. Many times they've staged raids on Dauntain who've held changeling prisoners. Because of the nature of its business, the Order needs Glamour in great amounts. Of course, they never steal it, such crimes being against the goals of the Order itself. Sometimes, though, they are willing to fib a little to gain entrance to a freehold; not all Kithain support their activities, despite the Right of Rescue. Don't think of these dissenters as selfish; most are just trying to preserve the lives of all fae. They see the Order's activities as a terrible risk. Even the High King has instructed his subjects not to approach Dauntain directly, though of course he supports the Escheat. As much as the Order's white lies distress me, though, I have to acknowledge the good that these people do. Give them your support if you should meet any, for their path is fraught with danger. They can be recognized by the chains they wear, forged from tiny silver links.

The Ranters

This group of commoner anarchists has two main targets: sidhe and titled commoners. Don't let their supposedly just aims confuse you; they're a bad bunch. The Ranters have recently concentrated their efforts more on the Shining Host, but wouldn't limit their terrorism if given good opportunity. High King David outlawed the group shortly after his coronation, but the Ranters are still quite active. While other commoner dissenters prefer

the Parliament of Dreams to make their case, the Ranters like random violence. If you suspect you're in the company of these extremists, get away as fast as you can.

(For more information on these unruly commoners, see **Nobles: The Shining Host.**)

The Seekers of Lyonesse

This is a relatively new crowd to enter the political scene, and I must say their goals are quite ambitious. These folks believe with all their souls that a path, perhaps more than one, exists in this world which leads back to Arcadia. They also think that part of Arcadia is a blessed realm called Lyonesse, and it's that place they're really after. So the Seekers do just what their name implies: they travel the world, check out rumors and talk to the wise. They keep all this knowledge compiled and updated; supposedly a nocker runs some kind of database for them. The head of the outfit is an eshu grump named Badr al Din; rumor has it that some werewolves even claim kinship with him. Anyway, Badr has hundreds of contacts, and kith of every kind are welcome among the Seekers. Even a few sidhe have joined up because get this: Badr fancies himself some kind of prophet and says that those who will eventually find the gate will be two, one highborn and one lowborn. Without their friendship and cooperation, the way to our legendary home will never be

found. Members have also gone so far to say that the disappearance of High King David is all part of Badr's prophecy. Many of us, myself included, think of David as Arthur reborn, with Caliburn as Excalibur. Not so, say the Seekers; David is more like Uther Pendragon, who found the mighty sword but left it in a stone for his son to bear. Well, if *that's* the case, who's the son and where's the stone? What about Queen Faerilyth and the Regent Morwen? Or the heir, Princess Lenore? There's too many unanswered questions, yet I can't deny that Badr al Din has much wisdom. You'll know the Seekers of Lyonesse either one of two ways: their endless stream of questions or the enameled green brooch each wears on his left breast.

The Silver Rose

Taking their name from a Munich student protest group of the early 1940s called the White Rose, members of the Silver Rose were spies and troublemakers during the Five Years War. They generally made a nuisance of themselves in the territory that became the Bavarian League, although offshoots were active in the Council of the White Mountains and the Elbian Protectorate. The Silver Rose, though not stout warriors, made a real difference in the war effort. They spread propaganda, carried information and rallied a lot of support among commoners who didn't want to get involved at first. Most of the group were childlings and wilders;



So You Want to Join a Motley

From Nibbles the pooka:

For many commoners, their motley is their family. Members of the motley trust one another and put their lives in each others hands. The benefits of the motley are plenty, including protection, friendship and inspiration. The downside is that Traditionalist nobles believe that motleys are little more than bands of commoner outlaws. Sure, that may be the case on occasion, but most motleys are just good pals who stick together through thick and thin. Me and my friends have never hurt anyone; our worst crime is the occasional silly string attack on April Fool's Day.

If you want to join a motley, I'd say you first have to earn the group's friendship and trust. Don't push too hard. Hang around them, give a hand when they need help and just have a good time. Confide in them, but take time to lend an ear, too. If the members think you're a decent fit, they'll probably be the ones to speak first. You'll figure out if things don't feel right soon enough, way before that time, in which case you can move on 'til you find a group that's right for you. It may take awhile, but believe me, having a faithful band of buddies can be the best thing on earth.

rumor has it that the von Folkke herself was among their number. Today, the Silver Rose still exists in various forms; some of the members spy on Neustria while others take care of security for the whole Galacian Confederation. Many of these new ones are the children or fosterlings of the original members.

The Sneakers

If you have the funds, this group of infiltrators and spies can do just about anything. They're all commoners, and in fact have one rep from each kith. Each member has a specialty; for instance, Tathy Gams the redcap is, not surprisingly, the one who knocks people's lights out. Eshu Misca Garel sort of serves as the front operator; on occasion, or so I've heard, she's managed to get certain information from her target through, um, her feminine wiles. I think the real brains of the operation is a satyr called Algernon. He doesn't venture out much, but he's a quiet type, and you'll always find more than meets the eye in those kind of people. Other members include Cassandra Bates, a pooka; Daunic, a sluagh eavesdropper; Leif Eyecatcher, a troll specializing in video and audio; a nocker fixit called Candy; and last but not least, a nimble-fingered boggan named Frankie James. If you need help, call the Sneakers; they're usually willing to work pro bono or set fees according to their employer's resources.

Veterans of the Accordance War (VAW)

The VAW is a commoner social club; the only requirement for membership is having fought in the Accordance War. A welcome is often extended to families of these gallant fighters, too. VAW meetings generally tend to be friendly gatherings with good drink, fine food and hundreds of war stories, many of them told and retold. On occasion, though, particularly on the anniversary of the Night

of Iron Knives, the mood becomes rather more somber. Old trolls, decorated with medals and scars, openly shed tears as they remember their fallen kin and companions. Eshu spin glorious tales of bravery and suffering, while satyrs echo these words with songs of the dead. I've been a member for many years, though I was just a childling in the war. Guess the fact that I was a water bearer still counted. Anyway, a finer bunch of people you'll not easily find. A member of the VAW would do anything for one of his own.

Perspectives

If you want to understand democracy, spend less time in the library with Plato, and more time in the busses with people.

— Simeon Strunsky

Commoners come in many shapes and sizes, with a wide array of political, social and moral outlooks. The following points of view are representative of a big slice of commoners, but may vary greatly from person to person and place to place.

On Sidhe Nobility

Even commoners who despise the concept of nobility admit the sidhe are hard to resist. No matter how hard a commoner tries, he can't make a sidhe look bad. Worse, unless he's got a heart of ice, he's helpless if a sidhe should make romantic advances. All too often these affairs end with the commoner's heart being broken; chances are the sidhe's social standing won't allow her to maintain the affair for long. Finally, centuries of tradition and indeed the force of the Dreaming to some extent has set sidhe above commoners. So what's a poor peasant to do?

As explained with politics, many commoners go along with the sidhe; if this is what the Dreaming has ordained, they say, why should we go against it? Others dislike the Shining Host but maintain a low profile; they deal with the sidhe only when necessary and otherwise keep to themselves. The smallest number openly oppose the sidhe, perhaps by joining a radical motley bent on terrorism, for example. The bottom line is that commoners are in a tough position with regards to the sidhe; for them, it's the ultimate love-hate relationship.

Of course, feelings towards some sidhe are different than others:

House Dougal

Nockers in particular admire the goals of House Dougal and often work alongside the apprentices. Other commoners, in whom the House has little interest, pay no special heed to its members. Pooka laugh about the dreary Dougal sidhe being locked up in their workshops all the time. Of course, none of them dare to play many jokes on these serious crafters, either.

When I was a childling, I had a playmate who was from House Dougal. We did all kinds of things together, then poof, he had to go work on some kind of big project. The next time I saw him, he was a grump, I swear it!

— Ellie McCrumb, pooka

House Eiluned

Many commoners are suspicious of House Eiluned and well they should be. One of the most closely guarded secrets of this House is that they are the instigators of the Night of Long Knives

(see **Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses** for the gory details). That said, eshu and sluagh often find a welcome at Eiluned courts, which are fine places to pick up the latest gossip.

The lords and ladies of the House have been exceedingly kind to me, even allowing me to be a scribe. Well, no, I don't write very much, but it's quite an impressive tabard they gave me, isn't it?

— Gavrel Sturminster, sluagh

House Fiona

Most commoners have relatively close bonds with this House, so well known for its good relationships with the common ilk. Among House Fiona are a large number of oathbound satyrs,

trolls and eshu. On the other hand, many common fae have been stung deeply in matters of the heart when dealing with House Fiona. A few have even gone so far as to seek revenge.

I loved her with the passion of life itself, and I never denied any desire she had. Then one day she refused to grant me an audience. Had she found another lover, I would have rejoiced in her happiness, but that she wouldn't deign to speak with me...that is base and cruel.

— Mikala Philopilodes, satyr

House Gwydion

Many trolls have eagerly given their service and deep respect to House Gwydion, for quite honestly, no finer warriors are to be found among the

Blood, Toil and Tears: The Roots of Civil War

The fragile threads which wove peace for Concordia are now slipping away, and more than likely, war will soon ravage the land. High King David once ruled in relative peace and prosperity. The roots of the war are many. First of all, there is a crisis of monarchy in the matter of succession; when David vanished, it was unclear whom he intended to succeed him. Would it be Morwen of House Gwydion, his sister and equal, who now serves as Regent in Tara-Nar? What of the High Queen Faerilyth, whom the departed king considered his co-ruler? Moreover, does the previous acknowledgment of Princess Lenore of House Dougal as his heir mean nothing, even though the Princess is now past her most tender years?

Another problem is Caliburn, which sprang to the hand of the eshu commoner Sir Seif rather than to the possession of a sidhe. Doesn't this mean that the commoners' time has come, ask some antimonarchists. To the embarrassment and dismay of the eshu knight, a small faction of commoners have joined together in an effort to proclaim *him* High King. After all, he has the sword, doesn't he? Despite Seif's humility, honorable intent and staunch insistence that he's merely the guardian of the sword until High King David returns, malcontents still hope to use him for their own gains. Most are commoners, but some sidhe also think they can easily manipulate the eshu, not reckoning with the wilder's strength of character.

Certain members of House Dougal, perhaps with good intent or perhaps not, believe that the sword now belongs to Princess Lenore and have sent some of their best agents in pursuit of Seif. What they don't realize is that the sword will currently accept no one but David as its rightful owner. The young heir is currently living with Queen Mab of House Fiona in the Kingdom of Apples. The Princess recently completed her Togail an Ainm and has become a wilder; her exemplar project, a requirement of her House, was weaving an exquisite pair of cloaks for the newly married royal couple. High Lord Donovan, impressed with both her handiwork and the wisdom she has garnered from being a fledge of House Gwydion, strongly supports the young woman's claim. So do many nockers, and their prowess with making weapons is a valuable asset in swaying opinion. Princess Lenore herself is a bit frightened and unsure, though in her heart she is beginning to believe that it is her solemn duty to press a claim for the throne in order to

prevent civil war. Queen Mab, much beloved by the commoners, is trying to let the Princess make up her own mind while carefully surrounding her with good advisors of many different kith...just in case.

At first, Regent Morwen was also inclined to crown Lenore High Queen; the king's sister utterly rejects any claim Faerilyth might have. She believes David's Eiluned wife was neck deep in the conspiracy to get rid of the High King, maybe with help from King Meilge. Now, a faction called the Morwenists, which include a number of Red Branch knights, are supporting the Regent, encouraging Morwen to take the throne herself. Morwen has redoubled efforts to find David, but like Lenore, she is beginning to think that accepting the throne might be a way to stave off civil war. Morwen would do almost *anything* to prevent Faerilyth from gaining power. Some of the Red Branch knights are commoners and will follow Morwen in David's absence.

Faerilyth is the really unfortunate player in this conundrum. Despite being Meilge's heir and a member of House Eiluned, she is truly a good and gentle lady who loved David with all her heart. She's also much tougher than her scheming former mentor Meilge suspects. Unfortunately, the High Queen has few allies among either nobles or commoners. One of the former is Sir Lleu, David's cousin. House Eiluned would probably support the High Queen too, knowing that if she is victorious or if David returns, they would become quite favored for their kindness to her. Any commoners in House Eiluned would likely adopt this outlook also.

A final faction to consider is the antimonarchists, both sidhe and commoner. Some sidhe think that balkanized feudal realms without a high king would give them much more power. The disgruntled commoners, on the other hand, think that David's original plea for peace is now all washed up; they tried it his way, and now it's a big snafu. Those who remember Beltaine and their de facto surrender in the Accordance War want to do things *their* way now.

All in all, some kind of violence is looming on the horizon for the land of Concordia...and rest assured, the commoners will be in the thick of it.

(For more details on the disappearance of David, see **The Kingdom of Willows**; for more ideas on how to run a Concordian civil war in your chronicle, see **Chapter Four: Storytelling** in this book.)

sidhe. Other commoner kith of upstanding character, strong values and good behavior find welcome, if not complete equality. Underlying even the most honorable Gwydion's noble visage, however, is a strong holier-than-thou streak that some commoners find demeaning.

The greatest day of my life was swearing fealty to Duke Karel Cœur de Lyon. He is everything a fae should be: strong, honorable and just. When you teach childlings, advise them to be respectful of their elders and emulate them in every way. Thus does the way of the Kithain and the Dreaming continue to be strong.

— Tostig Haraldsson, troll

House Liam

Commoners have an interesting relationship with House Liam. Many of the conservatives turn up their noses, offended at the House's poor reputation. On the other hand, most commoners realize that should every other bolthole be closed to them, a sidhe of House Liam would grant them hospitality, at least for the requisite three days. Of course, few commoners would admit seeking such shelter, but it's nice to know it's there for the asking.

It was a misunderstanding, of course, and certainly not my fault, but I had nowhere else to go. Even Lady Lynette of House Fiona turned me away with just a bag of moldy bread. Very tasty, I might add. Then Sir Casbah took me in. It wasn't much of a freehold; the

Balefire was no bigger than your candle. But it was a warm place to rest and make my plans.

— Crookmanning, sluagh

House Scathach

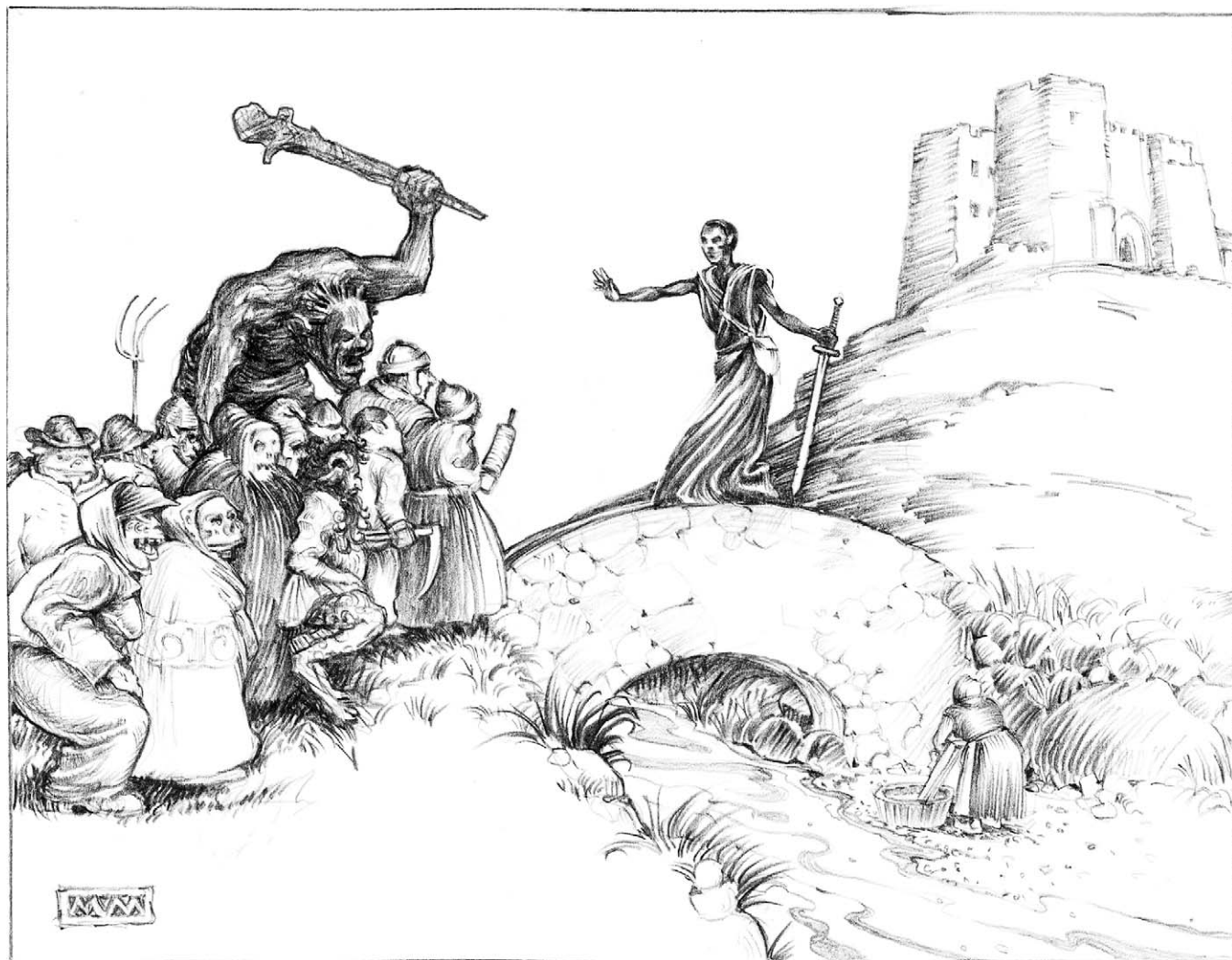
The lore about House Scathach is not well known among commoners, despite their many similarities. Commoners do know, however, that these sidhe stayed behind and mingled with humans. Many commoners would like to know more about the Scathach, who seem as hard to pin down as the wind.

I was fortunate enough to meet one of the Gray Walkers just outside Istanbul. We shared coffee and swapped tales. Then she slipped away; I had turned to ask for the bill and she vanished into thin air. Maybe they don't want to tell us too much about their past.

— Kalana Tomas, eshu

On the Shadow Court

Commoners don't really like to think too long on the Shadow Court. The advancement of Winter frightens them and to think some folks are deliberately hastening its arrival is pretty terrifying. Then again, some of the common kith have their own shame to hide. While most couldn't name a Thallain on sight, they know how far some among their ranks have fallen.



Wagging Tongues

From Gloria's Journal:

I'd say most people who spoke with me felt strongly about their political convictions; they'd give a fire and brimstone speech if they thought anyone was listening. On the other hand, many of these same fae would eventually shut up and share a drink with someone who'd been arguing with them moments before. So, I think it's fair to say a lot of commoners don't let politics stand in the way of friendship.

Of course, there's always a few diehards out there who'll never back down.

Leychard, nocker farrier:

What kind of question is that, do I like the nobles...Hell, girl, if it weren't for the kindness of the Shining Host I'd be out of business! And I tell you, I'd sure like to kick the tail of any namby-pamby sluagh or eshu who wants to say anything against the sidhe. They've done a wonderful job of running Concordia since their return. They didn't have to let us into the Parliament of Dreams, but they did. What's more, they always pay their debts and keep coming back for more. Give me sidhe rule over a bunch of incompetent commoners any day.

Clara Sterling, boggan tour guide:

Well, we can talk freely, can't we, both being boggan and all? I tell you the truth, I've lost my faith in sidhe rule. I was young when King David founded the Parliament of Dreams. I thought finally the sidhe had come to their senses, having seen that this century was quite different from the one they'd left. Was I wrong! Listen, the Parliament is like a big vanity cake, pretty on the outside, hollow and empty on the inside. It's a waste of time and resources, and what's more, it gives commoners a false sense of hope. Do away with the whole mess, I say.

Mahaley, sluagh theater critic:

Some say the sidhe have done us enormous good since their return while others imply the opposite. I say there's good and evil mixed in all people, Seelie, Unseelie, commoners and nobles. You can't judge a whole group by one individual. Certainly the sidhe have much to offer all Kithain; call this conservative if you will, but generally speaking, they *are* the best trained and experienced leaders. That said, they'd be utter fools to ignore the wisdom of commoners and their connection with mortals. Mark my words, young one: the sidhe stop up their ears to commoners' cries for justice and equality at their own peril.

Wadsworth, redcap demolition expert:

We don't need no law! Rules and order are for the pansy sidhe and their commoner toadies. When all the radicals talk about freedom, they don't got no sense of what the word means. It's only without any kind of government dragging us down that we can reach any kind of life that's worth a damn. And before you get your drawers in a wad, let me just say that there's nothing wrong with a little mob rule to make everyone tougher. It's like culling chicks back on the farm; you gotta drown a few to let the best survive.

Don't listen to gossips who say there is no Shadow Court. There are some Unseelie who pretend to be members, but they probably aren't. Someone who truly belongs won't tell you so.

— Heelnipper, redcap

The Unseelie Houses

Few commoners could spot a member of House Ailil, House Balor or House Leanhaun on sight. The strange heraldry might alert them to a degree, but unless there's a long discussion, no chance meeting will warn the commoners away. They'd be likely to think those of House Ailil or Balor members of House Eiluned or Dougal respectively. Rumors of fae who burn out humans with Glamour are prevalent, and a commoner might take hasty action if he found a sidhe up to this sort of crime.

There are dark houses, to be sure, but most of them have better sense than to mess with us. They keep to themselves, and I say it's better that way. If they should come calling at your door, be polite and courteous, but cautious, like you would with a rattlesnake.

— Dorrie Donaldson, boggan

On Titled Commoners

Ennobled commoners are in a tough spot. Some sidhe loathe and despise them while others are condescending. Untitled commoners are envious, distrusting and pandering in turn. A few among both groups genuinely respect the titled commoners; General Lyros, for example, is an extremely admired ennobled commoner. Few if any commoners, though, have refused a title or position given to them by a sidhe noble. The trouble with a commoner receiving a title is that land seldom accompanies the new rank. Ennobled commoners often live off the good graces of the local sidhe or strike out to build their own freehold, usually with a motley's support. House Fiona usually grants the most commoner titles, though House Gwydion has its fair share.

I know there's some bad blood between titled commoners and others of their kith and station. But shoot, if the person deserves the recognition, they should have it. I think most titled commoners have done a lot of good for their friends. And if the sidhe laugh or get huffy, what of it? Life's too short not to enjoy a few rewards.

— Tibbett Clemmons, pooka

On Gallain

Some commoners have made a study of the Gallain, and during the Accordance War received valuable assistance from these distant cousins. By sheer power of numbers, more commoners than sidhe have encountered Gallain, and they're usually more cautious in their approach than the Shining Host. After all, a shy Gallain might take more kindly to the curiosity of an innocuous boggan than a sidhe knight in the splendid raiment of House Gwydion.

The Nunnehi

Many commoners aren't unsympathetic to the Nunnehi plight, yet they're still not quite sure what to do. They agree the Nunnehi received an unfair shake, but the Kithain aren't ready to pack up and leave, either. In the past, several commoners have made friendships with the Nunnehi, and many hope to do so again. While several Nunnehi fought with the sidhe in the Accordance War, more than a few helped

out the commoners. Yet, relations overall are far from warm and cordial. Some of the Nunnehi nations are even allied with the Native American werewolves, which makes the situation potentially explosive; no commoner really wants to get involved in a tussle between the European Prodigals, the Nunnehi and the Native American allies.

I was camping alone out in the Kingdom of the Burning Sun when a sound of music and drums awoke me. It was a bunch of children! I saw no adults and assumed they were lost or had run away. Then I saw their faces, and so beautiful they were, I suspected these little ones were not human. They wore leather garments, decorated with beads, silver and turquoise. I joined in the dance for a short while, and it was a joy I will treasure always.

— Sekelaga, eshu photographer

The Inanimae

Commoners who fought in the Accordance War often tell stories about strange allies who fought with fire, water and stone; today, most Kithain scholars believe these were Inanimae, who woke from their long slumber early in the Resurgence. For the time being, these unusual creatures are keeping to themselves. Many commoners would like to renew their acquaintances with these beings, fondly recalling a time when they shared stories around the Balefire before the Sundering.

It was the Battle of Concord Forest, a minor skirmish in the big scheme of the Accordance War, and we were striving with all our might against Lady Valentina Wilderwood and her knights. Just when we thought they had surrounded us, a terrible wind stirred the trees, and from everywhere came crashing branches to knock the sidhe from their horses. Well, things were easy after that; we bound those nobles and traded them a few weeks later for some of our own companions. It was during the time we tended the prisoners, and I'll add that they were well cared for, that I heard one telling how he'd chopped down a tree just before the battle and burned it for firewood. Shoot, we'd all heard that something funny was going on in the forest and it was better to leave it alone. Too bad the sidhe hadn't heard the same rumors!

— Gijs Gustaf, troll farmer

On Prodigals

The Prodigals seem pretty far removed from Kithain blood, although some of these beings are considered friends or even Kinain. Most commoners are cautious about approaching Prodigals, having been spooked by rumors of abuse. While occasionally enjoyable company, the mages and vampires are sometimes dangerous Banality magnets.

Children of Lilith

Rumors continue to persist among the commoners that the Children of Lilith have some sort of link to the redcaps, and needless to say, members of that kith enjoy such gossip. If commoners mix with the Children of Lilith, it's usually with those who are somewhat outcast, such as the Malkavians, Nosferatu or Gangrel, or with neonates. Most of the other clans and elders are too tied up in their own dirty politics to mess with a bunch of faeries.

Well, how on earth was I supposed to know what one of the Children of Lilith looks like? She was friendly enough, sat in my lap, cuddled, cooed and did all that crap. So we go out to my car, and she

starts nibbling my neck. Hey, that was pretty fun. Then, get this, she starts biting me! It was like nothing I'd ever felt before, really wonderful stuff. Things might've been okay, but the stupid girl gets kinda crazy, like she'd taken an overdose. It was damn scary, and she tore out my dashboard before I could stop her. Do you have any idea how I'm supposed to explain that to my insurance agent?

— Hercules, satyr fashion model

Werewolves

Many of the werewolves' ancient pacts are with the sidhe rather than the common kith; the Silver Fangs and House Gwydion, and the Fianna and House Fiona are particularly close. However, it's the rare werewolf, particularly a Fianna, that isn't at least a wee bit interested in the commoners, too. Nockers, trolls and the Get of Fenris have been oathmates in the past, swapping weapons, mead and stories. The sluagh, piskies and eshu are rumored to have contacts among the Silent Striders while the Children of Gaia also treasure the common fae. Riddle contests, wild treasure hunts and epic double crosses are all part of the legends commoners and werewolves share.

That thing was the biggest, meanest and ugliest troll I'd ever seen in my life. So much for getting shelter for the night; I was worried about my life, I tell you! I figured my time on this mortal coil was at an end. Then, I'll be darned if this golden-coated wolf didn't show up out of literally nowhere. She was a pretty thing, and before I knew it, I was straddling her shoulders, hanging onto her neck for dear life. Later, after we'd made our way clear, she took me to a camp, gave me supper and let me wear this necklace home. No, I don't know what that sigil means; looks like a humped-back lizard, doesn't it?

— Molly Atwater, pooka

Wizards

Hermetic mages of House Merinita were once friendly with commoners as well as nobles; unfortunately, that particular group of willworkers seems to have faded from the waking world. Commoners are exceptionally superstitious, and as such, a little reluctant to get too cozy with wizards. They've heard rumors of corrupt or evil mages using commoner body parts in experiments and other such tall tales; these are enough to make the commoners quite cautious.

I couldn't help myself; it was a garden full of delightful things like aconite, foxglove and belladonna. Only the moon was out, and that a mere sliver. As I curled up under the verdigris bench, I saw them, all six, naked as jaybirds. They danced and called out into the night. Positively thrilling! Of course, I'm just as grateful that those witches didn't catch me watching their ritual; I don't think I would have liked being roasted in a bonfire.

— Peigi O'Moor, sluagh

Ghosts

The restless dead are perplexing to many commoners. Most of them accept that they will pass on into other bodies soon after their current lifetime, and it is troubling to find that some human spirits linger behind. Because of their mingled fear and awe, commoners generally have little to do with wraiths.

My predecessor said the wine cellars are haunted, though I had no cause to believe him until just last year. I'd taken down the Steinberg Rheingau 1976, and boy, you'd have thought I danced around the Balefire naked or something. Bottles flew off the walls, corks popped and then there's this guy dressed up in a butler suit sitting there. He

didn't speak but motioned for me to put the bottle back. I did exactly what he said; hey, my mentor didn't raise no dummy!

— Benjamin Armitage, boggan vintner

On the Autumn People

Commoners probably come into contact with Autumn People more often than do the sidhe, for after all, the common kith spend more time among humans. Sad though it is, for every creative, kind and loving mortal, there's at least one dark reflection who's destructive, spiteful and cruel. One reason motleys are so important to commoners is that they can keep an eye on each other, for Autumn People and Dauntain are an ever-present threat.

Yes, I have occasionally experienced a taste of Forgetfulness, and the experience was bitter and horrifying. But the risk is worth it. If we are not prepared to make a sacrifice for our people, then what good are we, eh? And if we can save just one fae from the clutches of Banality, then that's a victory. Are we outlaws, you ask? No, I don't think so. We're just willing to sort of bend the rules. Someone's got to do this, don't you agree?

— Neomi Grenheim, nocker, Order of Bianca

On Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve

Commoner opinions on mortals, in large part, relate to the beliefs of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. Those commoners who are Seelie usually protect mortals and often form close bonds with certain people. Members of the Unseelie Court are much more pragmatic in their dealings with humans; this isn't to say they can't have affection for mortals, just that they aren't afraid to use them to suit their own darker purposes. The thing about humans that causes fae problems is their insatiable curiosity. A persistent mortal can make the Right of Ignorance difficult to follow. Some commoners are a bit more willing to bend this rule than the sidhe.

Mortals are necessary for the Kithain to live; their dreams once spun our forms, and now their imaginations keep us alive. It's true that Banality is a problem, but hey, it could be worse. Think back on the industrial age. Or how about the late '70s, when all anyone cared about was themselves? Sure, you'll find a lot of brain-dead mortals out there; on the other hand, look into the eyes of a child every now and then. You'll see hope and wonder there, I promise.

— Tom Holcomb, piskey

Manners, Beliefs and Morals

There is no possible line of conduct which has at some time and place been condemned, and which has not at some other time and place been enjoined as a duty.

— William Lackey

Commoner manners and morals, as a general rule, are much simpler than the elaborate machinations and rituals of the nobles. Unlike the Shining Host, the main commoner tenet is the tried and true golden rule; commoners usually treat others the way they'd like to be treated. Boggans and trolls particularly take this to heart while redcaps are usually excused their poor manners. Another important belief is sharing. Especially

within a motley or mews, commoners share food, clothing and Glamour; it's part of what binds them together. Now, usually the borrower is careful to repay the loan, since that's part of the Escheat, but the timeframe is often flexible. It's much like the situation between trusted roommates or pub buddies, who take turns buying dinner or the next round of drinks.

The sidhe in large part view life as a game, whereas commoners view it as a learning experience. Most commoners believe strongly that they will return into new bodies after their death, carrying over lessons from their previous lives. This belief also affects the commoners' perceptions of time; often, they're not in the position of living every moment to the fullest nor trying to live in the past, present and future all at once. Only with rare exception do commoners possess the Chronos Art, and those who do keep it secret. Commoners live in the present; this isn't to say they can't plan for their best friend's birthday party next week, but they're much more concerned with what's going on right now than at some nebulous point in the future.

Each commoner has her own set of morals, evolving from her kith, seeming, Court and upbringing. So it's theoretically possible for a redcap to be somewhat cultured and polite and a troll to be a callous, lying brute, though these are probably exceptions to the general rule. The thing about commoners is that most tend to get set in their ways pretty early in life; this is why proper upbringing and fosterage is so important.

Etiquette

From Gloria's Journal: Details on Miss Wendy's Rules of Etiquette

There you are, young lady, and right on time, too! I am still curious why your guardian did not bring you here when you were still a childling, but no matter. We will begin today.

Commoners' manners mark them as proper lords or ladies, even if they have no title. Or should I say *especially* if they have no title. Nobles have a somewhat different set of manners they must follow which are both more indulgent and more restrictive at the same time.

Rule number one is to be a polite hostess, and that should come as no difficulty for you, I imagine. Tend to the needs of your guests, first and foremost. Let their conversation be the center of the activity. Do not worry overmuch about doing the dishes while your guests are still in your abode; you can always take care of tidying up later or get a childling to help you; it's good practice. Make sure everything in your larder is of the freshest and finest quality possible.

Rule number two is to maintain a tidy appearance at all times. This, of course, comes easier to some commoners than others. You seem in need of a fresh frock, though I admit those lettuce-leaf shoes are rather charming. See to it that you get a new one when you leave here; it looks to me as if you've been making so many biscuits, you haven't made time to change your clothes in a while.

Rule number three is to show respect for those gentles with noble titles. Of course most of these will be sidhe, and it is none too hard to display proper regard to the Shining Host. As far as ennobled commoners, well, use your best judgment. Yes, some

are truly deserving, so you should perhaps give them 95% of the deference you would to a sidhe. Others may not be, though they are technically still your superiors. Be polite, always, but it is permissible to be cool and distracted in their presence. After all, they're not *quite* as good as the Shining Host, are they?

Wait, why are you leaving? We haven't even finished a third of the rules! Come back here, you little cretin! How are you going to ever get ahead in life without the proper trappings?

— Miss Wendy, satyr columnist

Duty and Honor

Duty and honor are the meat and drink of commoners. Through heavy reliance on each other during the Interregnum, unbreakable bonds of trust and mutual respect have entwined all the commoner kith together; most understand and freely accept that the word of one commoner to another is nigh inviolate. Regardless of political perspective and outlooks on the sidhe, all commoners feel some kind of tie with others of their station. This goes far to explain why commoners are willing to put up with each other's more annoying character flaws. Duty to each other far outweighs personal feelings. Likewise, most commoners keep their promises, even the Unseelie. Of course the commoners are careful to whom they pledge their honor, but once the word is given, it will be kept. Some of the common kith, such as the sluagh, have found this to be their undoing.

It is wise of you to come to me for advice on duty and honor, young one. I have had many years to watch the Kithain, noble and commoner alike. And when you ask me what the words duty and honor mean, I am inclined to say that although we can set high standards for everyone, it is the heart, soul and mind of the individual that determines how duty and honor become real. Even the basest redcap can have a moment of charity while the bravest troll turns away her face in fear.

— General Lyros, troll

Rank and Order

Commoners usually think of themselves as one among equals. Each Kithain is a member of a society where they are cherished

for their bad traits as well as their good, and few crimes are so wretched that someone who is truly repentant can't be forgiven. If a commoner swears an oath of good behavior, most others are willing to forgive and forget, at least for the first offense. Note that this doesn't always sit so well with the sidhe, which in turn leads to some hostile feelings against the Shining Host. Having lived so long in the world, all but the most cynical of commoners, even Unseelie, are used to taking things at face value and accepting a stranger's word as truth, until he proves it otherwise. Lawlessness also has some different connotations among commoners; most are fairly laid back about the idea of their motley companions borrowing things because they know these will be returned. The Escheat forbids killing each other, so why worry about it? This attitude is what makes folks like Toren na Gulon and the Iron Brigade all the more wretched; not only are they sadistic killers, they also go against every ideal of law and order the commoners cherish.

If there's a division of rank and order among commoners, it's in terms of seeming rather than any stupid title. Young ones respect their elders, who likewise take it upon themselves to rear up the chidlings right. Sure, if some muckety muck has a title, that's fine; we'll be polite. But from my experience, I'd say most commoners will honor a wise graybeard more than some upstart wilder countess, even a sidhe.

— Densloe Maddingsley, boggan record keeper

From Gloria's Journal:

I think Marina was somewhat mistaken when she said the commoners' society and politics weren't as complex as that of the sidhe. I think they may be more complex! Not only do you have the ideologies of two Courts to consider, as do the Shining Host, but also all the kith, the seemings and the politics. I am more at ease now that I have met a wider variety of people and seen with my own eyes that sidhe are not always hated. After writing the history, the guilt was almost too much to bear.





CHAPTER THREE: FLESH AND BONE

Character Creation

Every man has three characters — that which he exhibits, that which he has, and that which he thinks he has.

— Alphonse Karr

Concept

A good concept is all important to creating a good character. A fully-realized character develops from the smallest idea. For example, you may have an idea for a troll who doesn't like to fight; instead, she enjoys playing the flute, although she isn't yet an expert. Likewise, maybe you conceptualize a boggan who runs some kind of store and has two brothers who don't know changelings exist. Once you get that seed, help it grow. For example, how does the boggan character keep his dual life hidden from his siblings? Did the troll never learn to fight, or is there some magical prohibition or oath involved? Eventually, the character will begin to grow. Work on the personality, then ask yourself the questions listed in the Spark of Life section of **Changeling**; these really help put meat on the bones. Don't worry if the character doesn't spring full-grown from your head like Athena. An understanding Storyteller will allow a couple of gaming sessions either solo or with the troupe for your

character's "shake down" cruise. Or, if you can't manage a solo prelude adventure, try imagining your character in a couple of interesting situations, and see what he does. What if the troll is challenged to a duel? What if the changeling's brothers snoop through his room and discover a Treasure? How your character reacts in times of crisis will give some insight into his personality. The personality may develop as you go, or the personality you've planned may suddenly experience some changes. The sedate and sober boggan may turn into a hellraiser of his own accord. Let him; it's a good sign when the character lets you know how he wants to be played.

Another important thing to know about your character is her political convictions. This is especially important in games where commoners and nobles interact. Is she conservative, or would she rather fae feudalism revert to a more egalitarian society? On the subject of the *sidhe*, does she hate or respect them, or is she indifferent? Does she want political power herself — a title, perhaps, or a seat in the Parliament of Dreams? Or would she prefer anarchy, the chance to do what she wants without anyone telling her what to do? Once you decide these things, ask yourself why she feels that way. Keep the Storyteller

informed about your ideas; chances are he can use your concepts to develop scenarios for the character and troupe.

Once you have the basic concept and some of the flesh on the bones, you can go to work on filling out the character sheet. When starting out a character, it's often frustrating to have to compromise with the character. Your perfect concept character is fast *and* smart, and she knows five languages and is a master fencer, but you don't have nearly the points to represent your idea. Or, you want a character who's just as good as your favorite movie hero. Don't worry about it. Your hero started out as something less-than-heroic, and so will your character. Half the fun is setting a goal for the character and working hard for that aim through the course of the chronicle.

Novice players might have an easier time playing a young, inexperienced character. That way, they are learning at the same time as their characters. You only play for the first time once, so enjoy the wonder. For those who have been through a number of characters and know the ropes pretty well, the Storyteller may start the characters off at a higher level. For example, the Storyteller may allow you ten or more freebie points, or tell you to take some extra dots in a particular skill; this reflects your character's worldly experiences and expertise.

Extra Freebie Points (Optional Rule)

People learn from living; that's what experience points represent. A thirty-year-old will naturally have more experience under her belt than a kid in elementary school. If both players and Storyteller like the idea, you can simulate this fact by giving characters a sliding scale for freebie points. For example, consider giving childlings 10 points, wilders 15 and grumps 20 (or 15, 20 and 25 points, or whatever you like).

New Backgrounds

Kinain

Commoners aren't completely on their own; they have mortal connections, known as Kinain, to lend them a hand. Since Kinain have a touch of fae blood in them, they can sometimes use Glamour and Arts. Because Kinain aren't as susceptible to Banality, they can be helpful when dealing with bureaucrats, hospital officials and lawyers. A well-placed Kinain can make your freehold disappear from the tax records or get an institutionalized Kithain released. Because Kinain have no fae mien, they make useful spies. They can also handle cold iron without suffering any ill effects. Of course, these people aren't slaves; they'll want help from *their* "special" friends, too. They may demand a bit of Glamour now and then, or ask to be taught Arts. If you Ravage or otherwise abuse them, they may exact revenge. If you want someone who has to do what you say, use the **Retainer** background. For more information about Kinain, see **The Enchanted**.

- One Kinain
- Three Kinain
- Five Kinain
- Seven Kinain
- Nine Kinain

New Merits and Flaws

Supernatural

Faerie Godparent (3 point Merit)

Through ancient oaths, your faerie soul is bound to a particular family and has been for hundreds of years. Even when they left the Old Country, they carried along their beliefs in the Good People. Maybe you are the proverbial fairy godmother, or maybe you're the tinker that cleans and mends while everyone sleeps. In any case, their belief strengthens you and preserves you; you may make a Willpower roll (difficulty equal to the character's permanent Banality) to avoid gaining a point of temporary Banality (this may be done once per story). If you have a Dreamer in the family, you may also reduce the difficulty by one to reach an epiphany with that Dreamer.

☞ Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, Court, Legacy, seeming, kith, motley (if applicable), House affiliation (if applicable), political outlook (if applicable)

☞ Step Two: Select Attributes

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (7/5/3)

Choose Physical Traits: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Traits: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Traits: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

☞ Step Three: Select Abilities

Prioritize the three categories: Talents, Skills, Knowledges (13/9/5)

Choose Talents, Skills, Knowledges

☞ Step Four: Select Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (5), Arts (3), Realms (5)

☞ Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Beginning Glamour, Willpower and Banality as determined by your seeming

Record kith birthrights and frailties

There are down sides. You are expected to help, protect and guide the family (perhaps you are a literal godparent), and their expectations may exceed your abilities. Also, you have to renew the ties; if Grandma dies and the children grow up without her stories, you may find yourself forgotten.

The family has at least one method of summoning you, whether it's saying your name three times or putting a saucer of milk on the back porch (You feel the summons and must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 6, to refuse).

While it isn't unheard of for sidhe to have this merit, it is quite rare for two reasons. Besides the fact that sidhe had less contact with or interest in mortals, even if they could wade through 600 years of genealogy to find their particular family, the family almost certainly wouldn't know their fae companion. It is interesting to note that a few sidhe have questioned whether this practice violates the Escheat's Right of Ignorance, whereas no commoner has ever spoken out against this honorable practice.

Unless the circumstances are quite unusual (Storyteller's option), characters should possess the Kinain Background to have this merit.

Changeling Ties Sell-Out (2 point Flaw)

Other Kithain see you as a sell-out, a suck-up, a traitor to your kith or just a sidhe-loving SOB. It may not be true — you

may be fulfilling an oath or geas, or you may be a deep cover mole. Characters with this Flaw are at a +2 difficulty on social rolls when dealing with other commoners (the Storyteller may increase the difficulty when dealing with commoners who are especially anti-noble). Other sell-outs may treat you better, but more than likely they won't, since you're probably competing with them.

Hostage (1-5 point Flaw)

Whether out of paranoia or just ruthlessness, a noble holds you as a hostage to ensure someone's good behavior. You may be held in a dungeon or tower, or be allowed the run of a freehold. It's possible that you have no travel restrictions; the noble may have laid a geas or other curse on you, one that takes effect if he's attacked. Note that being a hostage doesn't necessarily imply mistreatment; a dead hostage is worthless. In fact, you may be treated quite well, and may even pick up some choice gossip or important secrets. But the threat is always with you, and using that information could be bad for your health.

Point value varies; for one point, you'll get thrown in the clink if a certain troll ever shows his face at court, while five points means that if anyone ever attacks His Nibs, someone will march up to your cell in the west tower and do something terminally nasty to you.



New Art

Metamorphosis

In ancient times, faeries' forms were as mutable as dreams themselves. An echo of this power has been passed down as the Art of Metamorphosis. With it, princes have been turned into toads, children into swans and young kings into damn-near-anything. While not exclusively a commoner Art, it nevertheless was used extensively in the days after the Shattering, when skillful hiding amongst mortals meant the difference between life and death.

This Art turns a living creature into another living creature; therefore, a fairy godmother could turn mice into horses, but to change a pumpkin into a carriage or a man into a chair would require Primal.

The base duration for a Metamorphosis cantrip is one turn; successes beyond those required for the effect may be used to enhance the duration (see chart below). For example, with five successes the character using Impersonate (Metamorphosis ••) may look like a troll for one hour, or a perfect likeness of a specific troll for one turn.

- 1 success — One minute
- 2 successes — One hour
- 3 successes — Twelve hours
- 4 successes — One day
- 5 successes — Three days

Spending a temporary point of Glamour will add one level to the cantrip's duration; i.e., one minute becomes one hour.

Attribute: Stamina

Hidden Form

This cantrip allows the changeling to camouflage herself or another living being with the play of light, shadow and color on her body. This is especially effective in woods or other places with a broken landscape of darkness and light. Note that this cantrip only affects vision; going unseen doesn't necessarily equate with going unheard.

System: Difficulties to spot the changeling are increased by 3. The number of successes indicates the cantrip's duration. This cantrip differs from the Chicanery ••: Veiled Eyes cantrip in that since it is physical rather than mental camouflage, cameras are also affected.

Type: Wyrd

Impersonate

With this cantrip, the Changeling can alter her appearance to look like another person or kith; it doesn't bestow any of the powers or birthrights of that person (e.g., impersonating a master nocker gives you neither his skill at chimera forging nor his highly-developed Arts). The target will sound (more or less) like the intended target, but some skill in acting may be required to pass more than a cursory inspection.

System: The change may be simply an altering of the fae mien (i.e. chimerical), or it may affect the mortal seeming as well (wyrd). Successes determine fineness of detail. The Art paints with broad strokes, as it were, before concentrating on details, so in order to appear like a specific person of the recipient's own kith, five successes are still required.

1 success — Vaguely like another kith (You're sort of bluish).

2 successes — Could pass for the kith if they aren't paying attention (You look like a short, overweight troll).

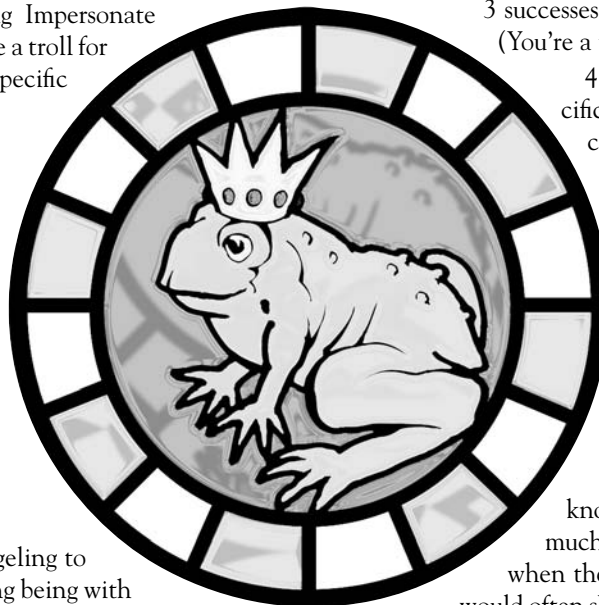
3 successes — Most of the details are accurate (You're a troll).

4 successes — Looks similar to a specific person (You're Lyros' older Unseelie cousin).

5 successes — Nearly a perfect image of a specific person (General Lyros, sir!)

Remember that the size must be similar to the caster's unless Metamorphosis ••• is also used.

Type: Wyrd or Chimerical



Go Ask Alice

This is one reason the fae are also known as "The Little People." Since it is much easier to hide from prying mortal eyes when there is less of you to see, changelings would often shrink themselves to small size. Some freeholds were built with entrances too small for normal-sized mortals to squeeze through, making the hold an inviolate sanctuary for those who possessed this cantrip.

System: The number of successes determines size. This can be cast multiple times to alter size or duration even further, so that 10 successes could make the recipient breadbox-sized for three days. As with Impersonate, Go Ask Alice can alter the size of the mortal seeming as well as the fae mien. Be warned that a 30-foot giant will almost certainly suffer Banality's effects should any mortals see him.

1 success — 3/4 or 1 1/2 times normal size.

2 successes — 1/2 or 2 times normal size.

3 successes — 1/4 or 2 1/2 times normal size.

4 successes — 1/8 or 3 times normal size.

5 successes — 1/16 or 3 1/2 times normal size.

Type: Wyrd or Chimerical



Merlin's Lessons

Fairy tales are full of princesses turning into birds, princes changing to toads, witches becoming cats and peasants turning into newts (don't worry, they'll get better). This cantrip is how the fae performed such feats.

System: Successes determine duration. For an additional point of Glamour, natural advantages and powers can be bestowed — for instance, a changeling turned into a bat could fly and echolocate. Metamorphosis 3: Go Ask Alice is required to drastically alter mass.

Type: Wyrd

Mythic Transformation

One of the most powerful yet dangerous cantrips modern changelings can know, Mythic Transformation can change the fae into a full-blown creature of legend such as a dragon, mantichore or firebird.

The changeling in essence becomes a creature of the Dreaming, with all the strengths and weaknesses of that beast. The changeling who becomes a dragon, for example, may be able to

fly and breathe fire, but may also be subject of extreme avarice and carry a fatal flaw in his armor. Likewise, a changeling in a unicorn's form may be able to heal with his horn, but would have an aversion to "impure" people. Powers and frailties are subject to Storyteller's discretion.

The dangers of using this are many. Because the changeling is an actual mythic creature, Banality slowly eats away at their very substance. The changeling loses Glamour at the rate of one per hour. Once his Glamour pool reaches zero, he loses Health Levels at the same rate.

Further, if a skeptical mortal sees the changeling, the changeling may be cast into a random point of the Dreaming in the same way chimera may be (See **Changeling: The Dreaming** page 224)

System: This is a very powerful but costly cantrip. For the transformation to be complete (all the powers and frailties of the mythic beast), the changeling must sacrifice a permanent point of Glamour in addition to the usual Glamour costs; otherwise, the character merely takes the form of the beast. Metamorphosis ●●● is required to drastically alter size.

Type: Wyrd



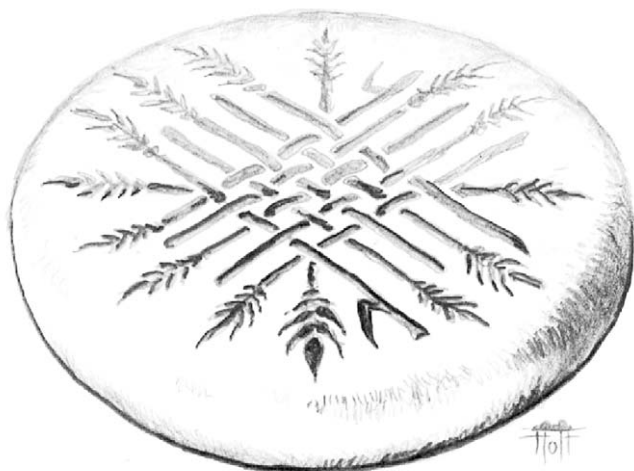
Treasures

Haven's Compass (Level 1 Treasure)

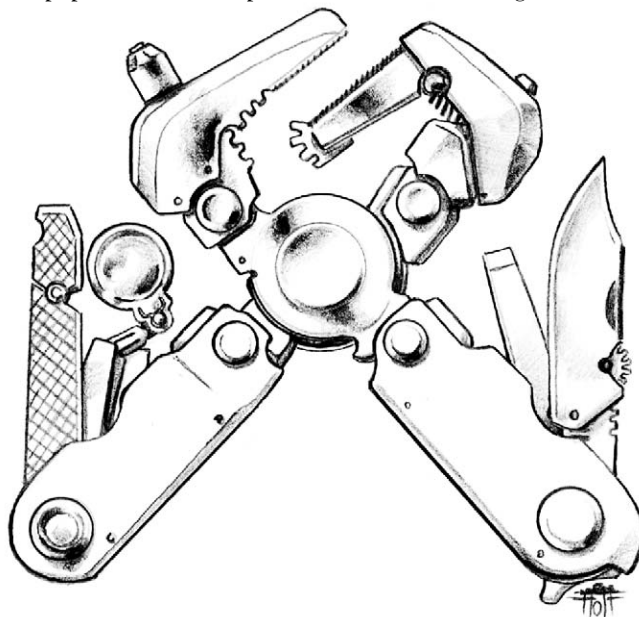
This treasure usually comes in the form of an antique compass. Rather than pointing northward, it homes in on the closest active freehold or glade. Useful for explorers and wanderers in need of "any port in a storm," the compass doesn't distinguish between the hold of a Seelie motley and that of an Unseelie commoner-hating lord. Since some holders keep their homes hidden, they may not look too kindly on the owner of this treasure.

Bakers' Stones (Level 1 Treasure)

Bakers' stones can come in any shape, color and size, though most are round and made from brown clay. When any kind of organic material is placed on the stone (yes, *any* kind of matter), it magically transforms into plain but edible cakes. In the Dreaming or near other places rich in Glamour, the cakes become richer and fancier, with icing, currant and fruit toppings.



Most stones produce three to five cakes a day, depending on the size of the stone; each cake will sustain one changeling for the entire day. Boggans especially love bakers' stones, but they're also popular with eshu, piskies and other traveling fae.



Whatchamagootchit (Level 2 Treasure)

This nifty little device is a nocker's dreamtoy. The whatchamagootchit is an all-purpose chimera-making tool. It gives the user +2 successes when crafting chimerical items; nockers receive a +3 bonus. Each whatchamagootchit is quite unique; some look like Swiss army knives, while others appear to be eyeglass repair kits.

Bane Dagger (Level 3 Treasure)

This nasty weapon was rare until the Accordance War; it is designed for assassination, and as such has been officially



proscribed. Naturally, enterprising Unseelie nockers have taken advantage of this to raise their prices.

The dagger has a small compartment in the hilt. When a part of the intended victim is placed in the compartment (a strand of hair, an eyelash, or a drop of blood), the blade becomes attuned to that person, and can never be reattuned. Attacks against that target are made at a -3 difficulty to hit, and do an automatic extra die of damage. Attacks against anyone else are made as a normal weapon. Once the target has been killed, the blade begins to corrode, disappearing in less than an hour. Though daggers are the most common of this sort of weapon, other types are possible (a bane arrow would be particularly nasty). Because potent magic is required to make these weapons, bane daggers cannot be made of cold iron.

The Dreamstone (Legendary Treasure)

There are many dreamstones, but none of the little Glamour batteries can compare with the Dreamstone of Madoc. The origin of the stone is not known. It was first discovered on an Appalachian ridge top by fae colonists in the 12th century. It appeared as a fist-sized moonstone, although given its nature, its appearance may have altered after eight centuries. The Glamour it focuses may “leak” out, causing the one closest to it to have vivid and often strange dreams which the person has no trouble remembering upon waking.

Its greatest power is the ability to shape dreamstuff. With it a skilled Dreamcrafter can create dream creatures of immense power, fold the Dreaming in on itself to create a pocket realm, or build a trod or a gate where there was none before. The rumor — untested, of course — is that the stone could be used to find and open the gateway to Arcadia!

The Dreamstone was used to open a trod between Europe and America, precipitating a war between the Nunnehi and the Welsh fae. The stone disappeared shortly after the trod formed, much to the dismay of the sidhe it was stolen from, and to this day no fae knows what became of it. The thief was a boggan wilder named Elgin, who saw that the Nunnehi wouldn't stand



for the sidhe possessing the stone; a brutal war was inevitable if the Welsh fae kept it. He respected the Nunnehi and did not wish the first owners of this land ill.

Elgin hid the stone away, not daring to use it. Though it meant permanent exile, he was content, for he had followed his heart and his honor was intact. And so he was forgotten, until the Shattering. Then the sidhe renewed their search for the stone and for any treasures or valuable souvenirs to bring back to Arcadia. A few elders of the Nunnehi, who still carried their anger against the nobles discovered the lonely boggan. They learned of his honorable sacrifice and decided to aid him. Using their magic combined with Elgin's, they hid the boggan's valley from all prying eyes. The magic also sheltered him from Banality; this full fae has become what modern changelings call a Lost One. And so Elgin of the Dreamstone, forgotten by all, waits in his valley for the future to discover him.



CHAPTER FOUR: HARVEST OF DREAMS

A story requires a drink.

— Traditional Irish saying

Are you a Storyteller? If so, this chapter was meant for you; it contains tips on developing themes, moods and successful plots. The focus is also on using interesting villains, building exciting settings and polishing off your chronicle with a memorable finale. This chapter also offers a number of story seeds to get your creative juices sizzling.

Using Theme and Mood

Theme and mood are essential flavorings for any good chronicle. A theme broadly describes what major goals your story is going to cover; long running chronicles may have more than one theme. Examples of themes include a quest for unity or bringing renewal from strife. Mood, on the other hand, is the general impression you want to leave behind when the story is done and the players are packing up their dice. It's the emotional tone of the game that lingers, like the finish of choice wine on the palate. Of course, most Storytellers find that these aspects of the game overlap and compliment each other. A certain mood set by the Storyteller enhances the theme and vice versa.

What is the Story's Theme?

If a friend asked you what your **Changeling** chronicle was about, could you answer her question? Maybe you'd start explaining how the latest adventure, the ransom of an eshu singer, let the characters perform a daring rescue. Your friend might shake her head and say, "Yes, but what's the chronicle *about*? Are you just running a bunch

of unconnected adventures?" What your friend is desperately trying to discover is the theme of your chronicle, the big picture, in other words. Talented Storytellers often know the theme (or themes — chronicles can certainly have more than one) as they begin thinking about possible adventures and how all the stories fit together. This isn't to say that all sessions must relate to the theme; sometimes a break from routine is great fun. But your chronicle can take on a whole new level of intensity if you weave in threads that pull the characters and story back to one overall theme.

Following are several classic themes appropriate for a commoner chronicle. Some may be more appropriate for one troupe than another, so pick and choose as needed.

A World Gone Mad

This theme relates well to the story of High King David begun in **Kingdom of Willows** and continued in subsequent **Changeling** supplements. All around the commoners, chaos is growing. Their familiar freehold and comfortable way of life as they've enjoyed it is changing; now, there's talk of civil war between the forces of High Queen Faerilyth and Morwen, the King's sister. Worse, without the High King to enforce peace, commoners and nobles who still seethe from wrongs in the Accordance War long for revenge. This is the world where the commoner characters find themselves, and maybe they have cause to get involved. Will they support one faction or another, or will they divorce themselves from the conflict? What happens when they're inevitably forced to pick a side or defend a friend? What issues do they want to

explore in this unsettling world — vengeance, peacemaking or loyalty? This theme combines politics, intrigue and war to make a rich tapestry for your chronicle.

Redemption

In this case, the theme is one that connects the changelings in the chronicle tightly to each other. At some point in the past, in this lifetime or another, the motley of commoners committed a shameful and horrible deed. Perhaps their reasons were just, but the end result was dishonorable or even vicious. The player characters are now bound by magic or conscience to redeem themselves. What did they do? Why did they do it? Who else knows about the past? How much do the characters remember? Will the characters have someone who will help them redeem themselves, or is there a foe equally interested in preventing this redemption? Adventures revolving around discovery of information and making atonement would be logical for this theme.

Shadows over Home

A chronicle with this theme is well suited for players new to **Changeling** and the Storyteller system. All adventures relate to the commoners fighting against a great darkness that threatens the existence of their homes and the lives of their loved ones. This could

be as simple as the gang of Unseelie redcaps who plague the county or more complex, with a twisted House Dougal mechanic with his band of fanatically loyal nockers who usurp the local baron's throne. While this is a basic theme, a Storyteller can nonetheless run a variety of sessions, including espionage, combat and court intrigue.

Fortune and Destiny

In a chronicle with this sweeping theme, fate has chosen the commoner characters to make an enormous impact on their world. Their actions will change the face of the World of Darkness itself and may well involve other denizens such as sorcerers and Prodigals. Perhaps this chronicle occurs in the last days before an endless winter, and the characters' deeds will determine whether the storm continues forever or blossoms into a new spring; the Shadow Court may be key enemies. With experienced players and an imaginative Storyteller, this theme can provide many story ideas and rich roleplaying experiences.

What is the Story's Mood?

When you're creating mood, think about emotions. What do you want the player characters to feel? Do you want them to think everything's going to work out in the end? Or do you prefer them to be fearful and apprehensive? Is the tone of the chronicle

A Rumor of War

In this sourcebook as well as **The Kingdom of Willows** are a number of story seeds and hints about the possibility of civil war in Concordia. Inspired Storytellers may enjoy running a long chronicle centered around this devastating event, provided they think their players would enjoy such a plot.

Look back at **Chapter Two: Natural Orders**; this gives you some ideas about the origins of the civil war. Maybe its roots are in the crisis of monarchy, or perhaps the basis for unrest is the work of a secret society. In fact, maybe you'll decide there's not one cause but many; these in turn affect different player characters and their interests.

You'll also need to think about whether you want to run a grandiose or small scale chronicle, and if you prefer a home front or battle front story. Perhaps you'll want a combination of both, maybe with each member of the troupe having two or more characters. A grandiose chronicle would have the characters regularly interacting with the major movers and shakers in the setting, such as the various claimants to the throne or those who seek King David. This crowd includes Sir Seif, Sir Lleu, Regent Morwen, Princess Lenore and High Queen Faerilyth. You might even want to set such a game within Tara-Nar or the court of Queen Mab. A small scale chronicle examines how the war impacts the individual characters and members of their freehold. As Storyteller, you may want to explore the hostility between local nobles and commoners, the plight of titled commoners, how beloved sidhe friends cope with bad situations and the dangers of bloodthirsty and vicious commoners (or sidhe, for that matter).

A war front story focuses on combat; these encounters can include small skirmishes, large scale battle or recon missions. Characters may be caught behind enemy lines from time to time. But to keep your chronicle from turning into one big hack and slash, don't forget about stories dealing with espionage, summit meetings and wet jobs (assassinations). Struggles for resources or missions to capture the enemy's latest weapon can also be interesting.

A home front story centers on life back at the freehold. Here characters cope with the difficulties of waging a war with few weapons and an oft unseen enemy. Maybe the characters at the freehold have dwindling supplies and yet have to make the home front serve as a hospital, a neutral ground for meetings and a supply and message depot for the war front. Moreover, these folks back home have to contend with mundanity; how do you explain to someone's boss that she's off fighting a battle for the unity of Concordia? Characters on the home front can also serve as spin doctors, secret agents or defenders against outlaws.

There are thousands of great sources found among war and adventure movies and television shows. A few include: *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (espionage), *The Eagle Has Landed* and *Where Eagles Dare* (covert missions), *The Manchurian Candidate* (spy thriller), *China Beach* (many faces of war), *A Midnight Clear* (antiwar), *The White Rose* (resistance on the homefront), *Braveheart* (great big scale battles), *Glory* (a different perspective), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (antiwar) and the plethora of Vietnam movies.



whimsical or deadly serious? In terms of pacing, is everything do-or-die, fast-paced and edge-of-your-seat tense? Or are things more laid back and easy going? Clearly setting the mood helps players get involved in the drama of the chronicle.

The following examples of mood, like certain themes, will be better suited for some Storytellers and players than others, so use your best judgment on what works and what doesn't.

Despair

Changelings are generally a good-humored lot. Even the grumpiest nocker or most devious redcap probably isn't without a sense of fun, even if it's a bit sick and twisted. So a chronicle with a mood of despair should have a huge impact on the characters. For whatever reason, your setting is a sad, dismal place. Maybe the characters have suffered past tragedies, or perhaps the future looks bleak in their freehold. In any case, the changelings don't have high expectations for sweetness and light. Perhaps this mood links with a theme of renewal, where the characters' quest is eventually to reinvigorate the local Kithain. But for the nonce, play up the hopeless outlook with somber music, heavy sighs and dim lighting.

Nostalgia

Ah, the good old days! When this mood strikes, everyone wants to talk about the glories of the past, often with little eye to the future. Revels always center around old war stories or ballads everyone's heard a million times. The scary thing about too much nostalgia is that it keeps people from trying new things, leading to stagnation. This may be a good mood to evoke if the player characters are eager new Kithain who want to bring fresh perspectives to the local changelings; they'll enjoy walking the fine line between blending in with their elders and bringing the court out of the 13th century.

Boundless Optimism

Everything's wonderful, perfect, couldn't be better. The changeling characters live in an idyllic society where peace flows between nobles and commoners, Glamour is plentiful and the worst news of the day is that the local pooka broke a fingernail in her latest prank. Using this mood in a chronicle can be a relief from doom and gloom; remember, not every game has to be dark and foreboding. To help lighten the mood and cultivate a bright, cheerful atmosphere, play some bouncy music. If you do eventually decide to darken the chronicle, the contrast will be all the more startling.

Rampant Paranoia

In establishing this mood, you want the characters to think, rightly or wrongly, that everyone is out to get them. They can't trust anyone; even their faithful chimerical pub cat might be a spy for the enemy, whoever he may be. Spies lurk around every corner, and perhaps every word the characters speak will drag them into a maelstrom of conspiracies. This mood is great for dropping red herrings and meandering clues in the players' laps. Of course, they'll eventually have to make some progress in discovering the truth, or else they'll lose interest. But the second guessing can be lots of fun for everyone.

Story Elements

What you learned in junior high language arts may actually have some value if you're a Storyteller planning a chronicle. This section reviews the basic elements needed to set up a plot, characters, setting, conflicts and resolutions for a commoner Changeling chronicle.

Plots

A plot is simply a series of causes and effects. It's the sum total of events in your story and how you predict the characters will shape or provoke those events. When thinking about plots for commoners, ask yourself some basic questions. What's the general sequence of the story? What actions will likely precipitate a climax? Are there certain settings and Storyteller characters you'll need to detail? What is the source of conflict in the story?

Many Storytellers jot down their ideas in a rough list of events. If the end goal is to have Frome the boggan meet Janna, his long lost nocker cousin, consider how the character arrives at that point. First of all, Frome needs some clues that his cousin is nearby; perhaps he meets an interesting Storyteller character at a seedy bar. Or maybe someone comes looking for him, saying that Janna is in terrible danger. Is the informant well meaning or someone out to get poor Frome? The Storyteller needs to think about the mystery informant as well as what kind of trouble Janna is in. And so the process goes on, from idea to idea, until the skeleton for a story is in place.

Once you've got a basic idea for a game outlined, expand it into a series of scenes, just as if you were writing a play. Try to put yourself in the players' shoes; what possible reactions will they have? How will these alter the plot? Any experienced Storyteller will quickly tell you that the only certain thing in laying out a plot is that the players will change it! Often, though, this can turn out to be more fun than what you'd originally planned, if you're willing to go wherever the wind blows. It's one thing to gently steer the players towards certain events in the plot; it's quite another to shove them along your strict path of encounters and settings. Letting the players and their characters make some choices and become interwoven in the story is a must.

Likewise, you need to develop elements of suspense and drama in your story. Don't put all your cards on the table at once; let the characters discover what's really going on over several sessions, not the first time you play. Feel free to drop some red herrings and even have some of the most helpful Storyteller characters turn out to be rats in disguise, if you think it will add to the sense of excitement.

The wise Storyteller invests some time in writing out her ideas and preparing notes and characters. A basic plot outline, like the one for Frome, is often enough for experienced Storytellers; others prefer more detailed summaries ready at hand. Flowcharts are also useful, as are maps and floorplans, easily purchased at the local shopping center. If you anticipate a big fight, make a quick reference sheet for the adversaries that includes Willpower, Health Levels and certain statistics and powers, such as Initiative (Wits + Alertness).

In short, do whatever it takes to be prepared for just about any direction the players take. This won't stop them from radically altering your carefully laid plot, but it does help you improvise and roll with the punches. Remember, the bottom line is for everyone, Storyteller included, to have a great time.

Settings

An easy mistake for Storytellers to make is dwelling too much on the setting. Most players will shiver with delight when you tell them about the satyr's luxurious massage parlor, with thick Persian rugs soft on their feet, the sweet music of a lute echoing off marble tiles and the scent of rose musk on the masseuse's slender wrists. But if you start droning on and on about the carefully laid four by six foot marble blocks set exactly eight inches from each of the inner walls... Well, you get the picture. The players will be bored stiff while you describe to the point of trivia.

On the other hand, you don't want to leave out important setting details. If you don't make the sure the players *know* about the dragon sitting in plain view by the roadside, they're going to get pissed when he jumps them. Try to find a happy medium between endless droning and skimpy details; in other words, be sure you describe the setting concisely, but creatively and well.

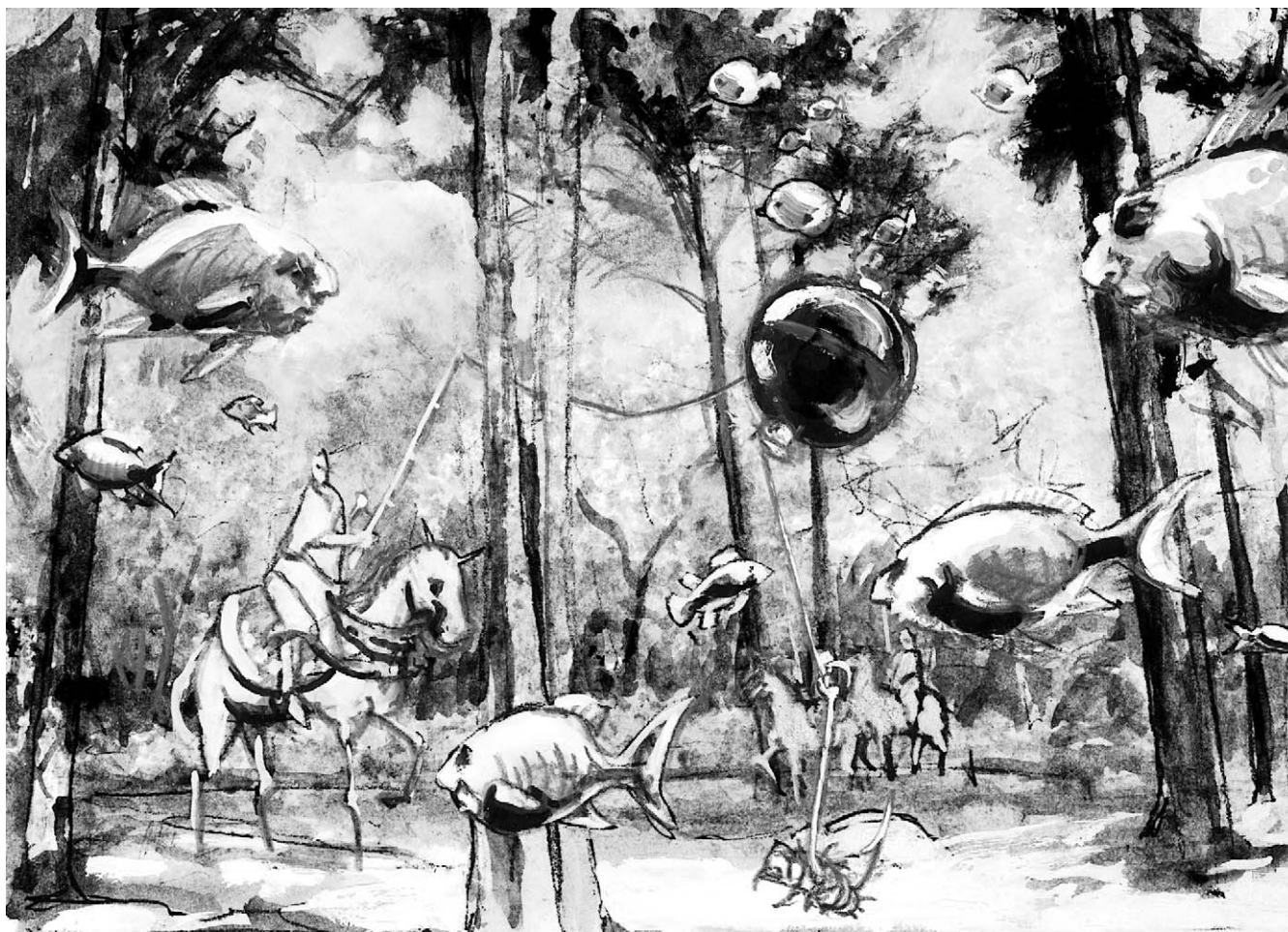
Of course, a setting is much more than one scene; it also includes the places characters live and hang out. Ask your players what their characters' houses are like. Maybe some of the motley room together, or have quarters at the local freehold. What's the local town like — a booming metropolis or a small farming community? Who's the noble in charge, and what kind of freehold does he maintain? Where do the characters enjoy eating and drinking? Are there good resources, like a library? Or do the characters have to travel a long way to do research? Player input is vital in developing the local scene, and many times they might surprise you with interesting details that can grow into great stories.

The bottom line is this: The setting is actually only as good as the characters and plot within it. A good setting will enhance your story, not overshadow it. Make sure you can achieve a balance between interesting places to visit and a creative, exciting tale.

Using the Dreaming

The Dreaming is a place where you can let your imagination run wild. Want herds of unicorns chasing after the sweet naive pooka in your chronicle? What about matching wits with a sphinx on a lonely road? In the Dreaming, characters' wildest fantasies — and worst nightmares — come to life.

Perhaps the most intriguing thing about the Dreaming is that the Kithain change dramatically when they enter this world full of ancient power and Glamour, particularly in the Far Dreaming and Deep Dreaming. First of all, everyone looks different — redcaps are more horrible, satyrs more erotic and eshu more majestic. But looks aren't everything; personalities change, too. While almost unimaginable, pooka play more tricks than ever, while nockers build incredible devices at a



breakneck pace. If the commoners have strong political leanings, the Dreaming is where their secret or even unconscious beliefs will manifest as reality. This could lead to some interesting conflicts within the motley as well as with any sidhe who might happen to be along. Suggest to the players that they roleplay their characters — good points and bad — to the hilt. After all, the changelings will remember little of what passed when they return to the mortal realms.

For more details in fae in the Dreaming, see **Dreams and Nightmares**; it's chock full of interesting critters and information on specific kith in the Dreaming.

CHARACTERS

Never forget that the characters should be central to your chronicle. If you have flat, two-dimensional Storyteller characters, your players will be bored. If the players' characters are cardboard cutouts with no flavor and nothing that inspires you, you'll have trouble coming up with plots for them. Everybody in the game needs to invest some time in creating meaningful, interesting characters.

To get some inspiration for involving the characters, think about the concept of theme once more. Remember that theme is what the story is about; now, apply that concept to characters, too. Most good characters are rooted in some theme; each one has a story to tell. It's your job to discover those themes among

the players' characters and bring them into the chronicle. For example, let's say Joan's eshu Kalana had a dearly loved mentor who was slain while robbing a sidhe's freehold; the eshu knows this has to be a setup. Kalana's theme is probably vengeance because she wants to find out why her mentor died and bring the perpetrator to justice. You can't make every session devoted to Kalana's quest for vengeance, but you can weave bits and pieces of the character's story into many sessions. Maybe Kalana and her motley find rumors of a conspiracy against the mentor in one session and even some hard evidence, such as a coded message, in another. By the time the chronicle is nearing a close, Kalana will be ready to serve her vengeance in a thrilling climax.

Of course, the more difficult part for the Storyteller is making sure the characters' stories are told dramatically. Joan would have been bored silly if Kalana discovered the conspiracy and brought her mentor's murderer to justice in the first session. Spread threads related to the character's story out over time, and you'll increase the drama and suspense tenfold. The Storyteller should also remember that this same use of character drama and story must take place for *every* player character. Sometimes, Storyteller characters also become intrinsic to the troupe, and players will be disappointed if their characters' friends and enemies in the chronicle don't get creative development. One way to help the troupe flesh out their characters is to have players write letters or stories from their characters' points of view. Another tool

is the solo or pair game. This lets most of the attention focus on one or two player characters' interests without worrying about boring others. This is also a great way to give Storyteller characters a chance to show off their personalities.

Players and Storytellers have a dual obligation to each other. First of all, players should contribute ideas and wish lists for their characters; telling the Storyteller how much they want to visit the forbidden forest or throw out the inept baron is one way they contribute to the game. Most Storytellers appreciate feedback and suggestions from players on what they want to do next. The Storyteller also has an obligation to help players make their characters interesting, or in the worst case scenario, to gently explain to players that certain characters may not work. If you're the Storyteller, running a chronicle set around finding three ancient tools of the nockers, a character who's a loner or likes to just sit around the Balefire all the time is not going to fit. It's no fun for anyone if the Storyteller can't make sure that all the characters have a reason to be involved in the chronicle.

Chimera

Chimera can provide comic relief as well as a means to pull the characters' fat out of the fire. When using chimera in the story, think about what kinds of creations would interact best with the characters. Chances are, no boggan would have (or want) a tall, elegant faerie steed; a fat pony or burro might make a lot more sense. Also consider what the characters would find useful. Are they traveling a great deal? Then some sort of chimerical transport could save them a lot of grief. Do the characters have to send and receive lots of messages from all over Concordia? A mechanical homing pigeon would be a time-saver. Also think about the characters' personalities. A proud troll warrior isn't going to have chimera that are cute and cuddly, and neither is the sluagh childling. But that sort of chimera might be ideal for the young boggan or eshu. Finally,

Bluebooks and Beyond

One of the best ways to let characters tell their stories is having them interact with others. But sometimes in a busy game, that's not always possible. In the 1980s, gaming guru Aaron Allston introduced bluebooking, and character development hasn't been the same since. The term bluebooking comes from his players using blue college exam books to let their characters write future plans, love letters or whatever. These were shared with the other player characters and the gamemaster; everyone would write replies, and a sort of roleplaying pen pal tradition was begun.

Bluebooks are still cheap and serve as a nice record for the chronicle. On the other hand, many players now have access to e-mail, which works the same way as a bluebook and is even faster. So if players want their characters to share intimate moments or secrets off the main stage of the chronicle, consider e-mail or bluebooking. You'll find yourself rewarded with enthusiastic players and neat new elements for your story.



remember that powerful chimera often have minds of their own; they can be a hindrance as well as a help.

Conflicts

One of the most important story elements is conflict. What are the major forces opposing the player characters? Do they have enemies — Storyteller characters who are adversaries or competitors? Is the opposition more esoteric, such as mythical forces from the Dreaming? Are the characters often their own worst enemies? Remember too that even friends and allies can have conflicting agendas. Whatever the source of conflict in your chronicle, be sure you have a good handle on how these forces affect the characters; spend as much time as necessary to flesh out the characters' opposition in the chronicle.

To get you started, the following examples offer suggestions on groups and individuals that might give the commoners a nasty time. As always, feel free to elaborate or change these examples to best suit the needs of your chronicle and players.

Villains are People Too!

Memorable bad guys never do anything just because they can. Think about your favorite outlaws, enemies and adversaries — they're often cruel, evil bastards, but they're anything other than boring and predictable.

From the billions of examples, let's look at one: Adrian Veidt from *The Watchmen*, a graphic novel by Alan Moore. Veidt is a hero with hubris the size of Manhattan. In the past, he's saved lives, but in the course of the story, he takes the job of creating a better world solely onto his own shoulders. As a result, he kills millions of innocent people, destroys most of a major city and ends up sacrificing several of his own teammates. Veidt's reasons were certainly pure and noble in his own mind, but to the victims, he was an evil, self-righteous bastard. Yet what makes him so interesting is that even his enemies would agree that *maybe* the ends justified the means. The world ended up a better place by the story's end, but Veidt was no less a villain. That mixture of human frailty, vision and unchecked power made him quite a fascinating character.

Most of us aren't as gifted as Alan Moore, but we can learn from his example. When creating villains, think about their motivations. What's their history? Why do they act the way they do? What led them down their path? Are they trying to prove something? Are they making up for something missing through their crime and villainy? Or is their own vision of how the world should be all that matters?

Villains, just like player characters, have a story to tell. As a Storyteller, you can add one more brilliant thread to your chronicle by creating villains that are just as interesting and witty as the other players on the stage.

Sidhe

Most sidhe, even the more egalitarian and open-minded ones, have been reared to believe that it is their place to rule; it's the natural order of life for fae, and commoner rulers are an anomaly. Such ingrained behavior is hard to overcome, and some sidhe don't think they should have to do so in the first place. The majority swallow their shock at seeing a pooka baron and keep their feelings to themselves. Others are more vocal about their dismay, and a few are downright violent about the whole affair. Perhaps most insidious are those sidhe who are hypocritical, two-faced snobs — these are the types who are helpful and considerate to commoners face to face, yet mock these same fae after returning to their castles and boudoirs.

Conflict may arise between sidhe and commoner characters if the former are constantly overlooking the good work and deeds of the latter. Many nobles only recognize skill at war, disregarding the lorekeepers and stalwart hearts among the other kith. How long will the commoners put up with sidhe apathy?

Other Commoners

Who said that all the commoners were on the same side? A chronicle that spotlights the various political differences between common kith makes for an interesting challenge. Many commoners are moderates, who agree to have sidhe leaders with other kith in positions of power and influence. Some commoners believe that power should be split equally among all changelings, without regard to kith; since commoners are a majority of changelings, why don't they have the bigger half of the pie? Others think that the sidhe are meant to rule, no matter what, and that commoners should be loyal, devoted subjects without delusions of grandeur. Opinions are one thing, but sometimes extremists on both sides come to blows. What are the feelings of the commoners in your chronicle? Are they divided by opposing political views? Do they set aside their differences in the face of danger? Or are they more devious and backstabbing? Letting the characters discover an enemy within their own circle of friends could be an interesting twist to the chronicle.

Secret Societies

Some societies aren't so secret; they're just groups of changelings who join together for the sake of common interest and ideological political banter, such as the Veterans of the Accordance War. A few commoner societies form because of certain goals or duties, such as the Order of Bianca. Other societies have exclusive membership and rather frightening goals; such nefarious groups as the Beltaine Blade and the Ranters are in this category. If the player characters come to the attention of such a society, they've made an enemy indeed. Depending on the newfound foe, the characters may have to face assassination attempts on their flesh or their good names, loss of possessions or even exile. How the commoners deal with these threats should involve all the characters — will they fight honorably or sink to the level of their enemies? See **Chapter Two: Natural Orders** for more information about the variety of secret societies.

Noble Houses and Commoners

Each of the noble houses has its own outlook on commoners and granting them noble titles. Following are some opinions and facts about the relationship between the houses and the common folk.

House Dougal

A pooka made this? Are you sure? 'Tis one of the finest crystal goblets I've ever seen. I don't care whose work it is, and I don't care if he has a tail. Just bring him here immediately!

— Lord Walter Burroway, Master, House Dougal

Reality: House Dougal respects gifted artisans, whether they be sidhe or commoner. On the other hand, they could care less about the unassuming sluagh who collects pretty trinkets and tells secrets. Nothing but duty and their craft matters to members of this house. They reward commoners with titles only if their work is deserving of such honor.

House Eiluned

If the chosen leader of a demesne be sidhe or commoner, it matters little to us. We do not make our oaths of allegiance lightly, and once spoken, so shall it be done.

— Countess Cyndia Sinclair, Kingdom of Grass, House Eiluned

Reality: House Eiluned gives their loyalty to whoever has the upper hand, noble or commoner. Few members, if any, consider commoners their equals and believe that granting them membership in House Eiluned is a generous gesture; obsequious shows of gratitude are expected in return.

House Fiona

We judge no Kithain by their face and form, but rather by the deeds of their heart and soul. Even the most humble fae can be friend in joy and sorrow.

— Baron Kendall de Witt, Kingdom of Northern Ice, House Fiona

Reality: Most members of House Fiona do respect and admire commoners; a few of these sidhe nobles even sided with the commoners during the Accordance War. A number of commoners have titles from this house, though few have lands. On the other hand, no kith is immune to House Fiona's fickle ways. One day a commoner may be a Fiona's dearest love and the next, his fair-weather friend. Such attitudes can wear down feelings of trust and obligation.

House Gwydion

A comrade brave and true, whose mettle has been tested on the field of battle, is worth a thousand times his weight in gold. We welcome any who stand strong against falsehood and dishonor.

— Lady Margala of Dovedale, Kingdom of White Sands, House Gwydion

Reality: House Gwydion sees the protection of all Kithain, commoner and noble, as its paramount goal. They have among their titled members several trolls, but few of other kith. Not only great service but skill in battle and leadership are prerequisites for joining House Gwydion. Needless to say, most sluagh and pooka aren't up to the task, and the house doesn't really believe in making exceptions.

House Liam

We accept anybody, as long as they can uphold our beliefs and put up with all the bad press we've accumulated over the years. Pointed ears or not, what does it matter if the person's heart and mind are in the right place?

— Sir Eric Silverkeys, House Liam

Reality: House Liam gets along with some commoners better than others. They admire and respect the quiet nobility of the boggan, the pooka's warm personality and the wisdom of the eshu. On the other hand, redcaps, nockers and sluagh repulse many members of the house. Still, House Liam understands the rough life of an outsider and would probably be sympathetic to a commoner in need.

Prodigals

If it's not the Kithain or their ilk making trouble, chances are the Children of Lilith, werewolves, a gang of sorcerers or even some pesky ghosts are about to stick their noses where they're not wanted. Setting up wraiths, mages, vampires or werewolves as enemies can be a lot of extra work but also quite rewarding, particularly if you have new players who'd like to join the chronicle. Likewise, it's a lot of fun for players who've never played other games in the Storyteller System; the regular **Changeling** troupe can get a glimpse of different individuals in the World of Darkness from a unique angle. One way to use Prodigals is to set up the conflict over a particular place or object valuable to several different groups (the Dreamstone, for example; see **Chapter One: To Victors, the Spoils**). Prodigals can also serve as advisors, but you should remember that they'll always exact a price, usually something the player characters don't want to pay. Finally, be cautious about

how often Prodigals show up in the game; the last thing you want your players to say is, "What, *another* damn vampire?"

Autumn People

Autumn People and Dauntain are difficult and dangerous enemies. With only a few words and deeds, they can destroy Glamour and send a changeling reeling into forgetfulness. Such foes are not to be approached lightly or haphazardly. Autumn People make for good archenemies in a chronicle; facing them in an all or nothing final battle might be an exciting way to draw the story to a close. If your chronicle is centered on a theme of renewal, restoring a Dauntain to her true self can be satisfying and suspenseful. The bittersweet note for commoners is that if they fail in their quest, some nobles may forbid their rescue, while if they are overwhelmingly successful, they might not reap the rewards a sidhe would. How the player characters deal with this double standard is also a good roleplaying dilemma.

Resolutions

Two kinds of conclusions occur in a chronicle: temporary, where one story thread ends and the next thread of the adventure picks up, and permanent, where you draw the entire chronicle to a close. Both are a matter of pacing, good record keeping and paying attention to the needs and desires of the players and their characters.

The trick to ending one segment of a story is twofold: end in a logical place and leave enough unanswered questions to start the next segment off on an exciting note. Always remember to let the troupe finish what they started. Don't end a session in the middle of a battle; no one will recall what was going on by the next time you play. Similarly, try not to end a multi-part story without allowing the characters to reach a good stopping point. Even if they weren't able to complete their quest, ending for a winter respite in the troll's meadhall is much better than leaving characters stranded in the wilderness during a snowstorm. Then, when you're ready to continue the story, revisit the unresolved issues. This will get players reinvigorated about the plot and their characters.

Most importantly, after the game is over for the day, sit down and talk to the players. Did they like the session? What was the most fun? Did they write down all pertinent information about secrets discovered and people met? What things about the game would they like to change? Many times, players themselves come up with excellent ideas for the next series of adventures. If they mention how neat it would be to visit the Valley of Pooka, then you already have the beginnings of a new plot in hand.

A good ending to a long-running saga isn't a simple thing; it's takes a lot more effort than just ending one session. Storytellers need to make sure they have all plot threads neatly tied up and that everyone had a chance to fulfill their character's purpose and story. If you, the Storyteller, don't deliver on the players' hopes for their characters, they'll be disappointed, and they'll remember the chronicle with a bad taste in their mouths. Make some time to talk to the players before you plan out the final session. Think about how you can make the death-defying battle against the big enemy dramatic and memorable. Make sure everyone goes home speechless at the clever climax and roleplaying opportunities.

After a chronicle closes, you may find the opportunity to run one-shot games for the players. This is a good option for nostalgia, to remember how great a game was. Likewise, the players may enjoy their characters being guest stars in your new chronicle or that of another Storyteller and setting; having a fae show up in a **Werewolf** chronicle is quite conceivable. When players tell tales about your skills, you'll find it's pretty easy to get another chronicle going. Don't forget to enjoy a break from Storytelling, too; join another troupe and have a character of your own for a change. You'll find this refreshes your enthusiasm and gives you more ideas for your own players.

Story Seeds

Everybody's pool of creative ideas runs low at some point or another. The following are brief scenarios centered around

commoners; they're not full-length chronicles but germs of ideas to get your own imagination flowing. Pick and choose or mix and match as you desire, as always adjusting for the needs of your chronicle and player characters.

Things Boggan Weren't Meant to Know

What would happen if the most innocuous and unassuming member of the motley discovered a terrible piece of best-forgotten lore? This seed offers quiet little faeries a chance at enormous power, with a price, of course. What will the fortunate changeling do — keep the secret to herself or share it with her loyal friends? How will the other player characters react when they're suddenly plagued by nightmares and frightening chimera? Will they realize the link between the secret knowledge and all the trouble? Or will discover their friend's fate too late? Don't forget to make sure the gentlest member of the motley is *sorely* tempted to use her new knowledge; send her on a road to hell paved with good intentions and the natural human desire to be bigger and better than everyone else.

Get Sir Seif!

Whether sidhe malcontents, ambitious commoners or the forces of House Dougal, lots of people are eager to find Sir Seif, holder of Caliburn. Meanwhile, he's doing his best to find High King David before trouble *really* starts. Seif shows up near where the characters live, and he needs to lay low for a while. Will they give him a hand, knowing his cause is honorable? What if some are sworn to help other factions, such as Princess Lenore and House Dougal? If you're running a civil war chronicle, you could also make this a noncombat roleplaying session, where Sir Seif entertains the characters in peace and quiet before the war's havoc once again touches their lives.

The Concordian Candidate

If you decide to take on the Herculean task of running a Concordian civil war, this seed can provide complications both before and after hostilities break out. It also works best if you have a player who's willing to have his character serve as a sleeper — an unwitting agent. This poorsap is captured and brainwashed by the enemy who then send the character home, probably with some wonderful yet believable story about his bravery in combat after being separated from his unit. What the other characters in the chronicle don't know is that spies near their own forces plan to use the character for a variety of nasty activities, including assassination, capture of state secrets and so on. All it takes is a trigger word, easily given over a telephone or via messenger chimera, and a command; the unfortunate guy then does whatever he's told. If he were told to kill his best friend with cold iron, he'd try to complete the deed. The interesting part comes when the other characters either catch him up to no good or accidentally use the trigger word, followed by some ludicrous command. How will the changelings help their friend? What will he do after discovering his plight? What will the forces in charge have to say about his guilt or innocence? This seed could work for commoners fighting against or supporting the sidhe.

Last Will and Cantrip

A fading commoner grump leaves his small freehold to the player characters as part of his last will and testament; it's not a fancy place, but it does have a warm Balefire and many happy memories. Problem is, the local sidhe lord and lady also covet the place. In fact, they want it so much, they're willing to get underhanded and defy the poor grump's last wishes. What will the commoners do when faced with this sidhe oppression? Will other nobles help the motley, or take the sidhe's side in the issue? Where can the characters turn for justice against this outrage?

The Booby Prize

While on a hike through the wilderness, the commoner characters find a seemingly unimportant treasure; it could be a rock, an old arrowhead or even some faded bones. In actuality, this object is ancient, powerful and dangerous; strange dreams come to all the motley, accompanied by some unexplained events. Yet whenever the characters approach satyr sages or eshu travelers, no one seems willing to talk about it; in fact, everyone clams up and advises the commoners to get rid of the thing. It's up to the Storyteller to decide what the treasure is and who rightfully owns it. Perhaps the whole discovery is nothing but an elaborate pooka joke. On the other hand, maybe someone else is looking for the treasure, and wiser fae know to stay away from it.

Sic Transit Utopia

The motley is given a quest by a mysterious being, perhaps a Prodigal or a Gallain, to build a haven for all fae, noble and commoner alike. They receive a goodly sum of money from their mysterious benefactor and a timeframe of 13 months to complete their task. Now they have to find a piece of land and some locals with clout to back up their claim. Who is the mysterious being, and why is she supporting the characters? Is she a disgraced noble trying to make amends in secret? Or is she a creature of darker designs using the commoners as henchmen?

Highway Robbery

This story seed works best for Unseelie characters. One day, a member of the motley discovers a message written on goblin parchment, directing him and his friends to take on a task. Their mission, should they choose to accept it, is to rob a certain lightly guarded noble entourage, making general chaos in the realm. The motley can keep half the goods and must deposit the rest near an ancient oak tree. In return, they get nifty weapons, dross and delicious provisions, and to seal the bargain, a small cache of dream stones is already waiting for them. Any hungry, down on their luck fae would be a fool to say no! So who is the highwayman in charge? Are the characters being set up, or is this the beginning of a beautiful friendship with an outlaw?





White Wedding

Everyone in the local barony loves Lady Ariana; like most sidhe childlings, she's an absolute delight, with all the energy and magic of an eight year old. Now consider that Lady Ariana has disappeared, and her four knightly guardians no longer remember themselves. Only because the characters have a contact among the redcaps do they know that an Unseelie motley has spirited her away to marry one of their movers and shakers, a twisted knight who may belong to the Shadow Court. The commoners must act quickly before the final oaths are taken! Who knows what terrible things will befall the innocent sidhe maiden? If you want to be a little more daring, have some of the troupe play the Unseelie fae who'll fight tooth, claw and nail to get the pretty sidhe to marry their dread lord.

Murder Most Fowl

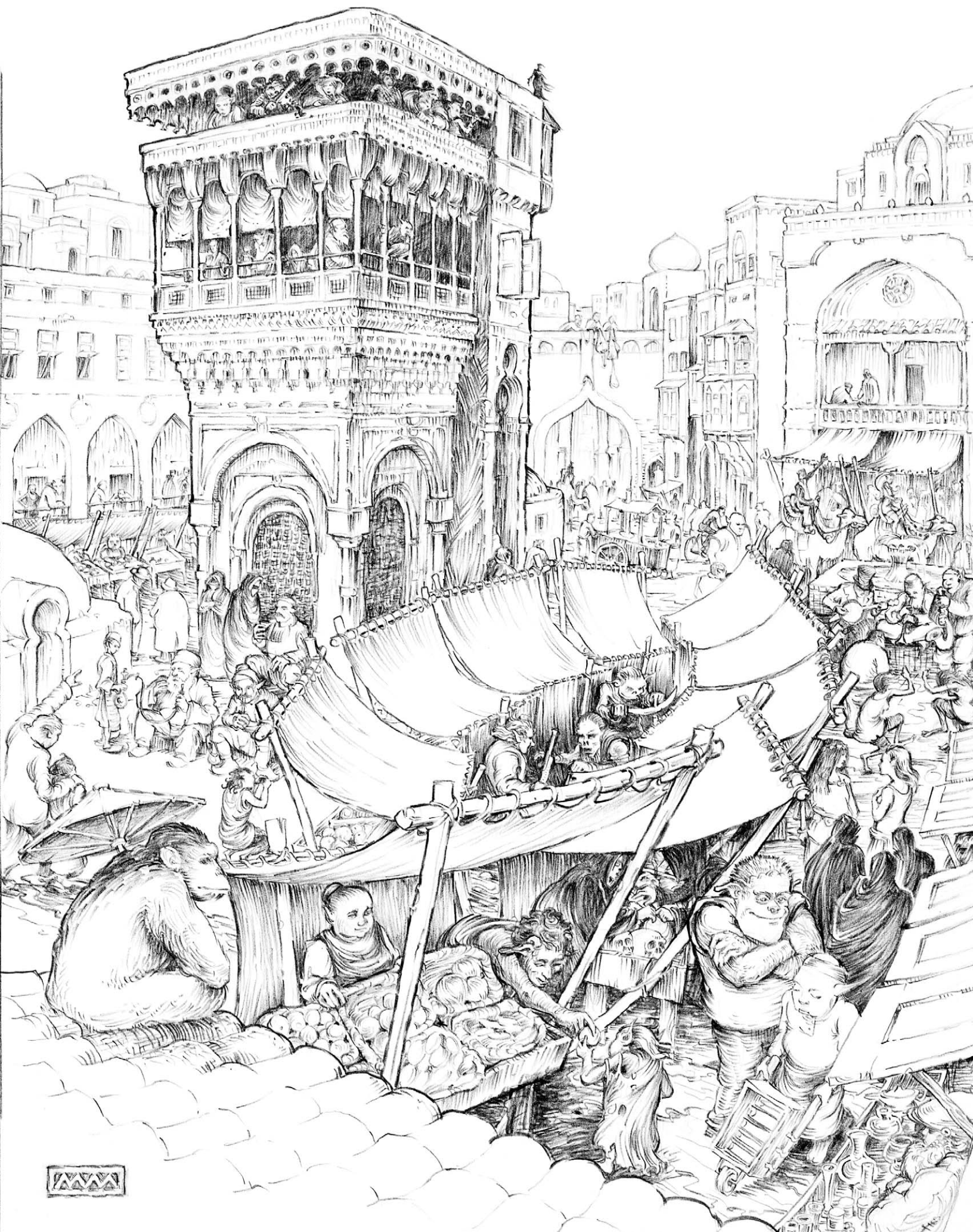
In the midst of a major state visit by foreign nobility, one of the ambassadors is murdered. Then, the local court jester, a chicken pooka, is found holding the murder weapon, a cold iron hat pin. Of course it's a setup, and in reality, the victim was killed by a member of his own court. How can the commoner motley prove their friend's innocence? What if the visitors are out for blood? Will the characters stage a jailbreak or rely on noble justice to discover the truth?

Rag Doll

For centuries, commoners have had to cope with their mortal lives intruding into their fae identities. So it goes with two young star-crossed lovers, friends of the player characters. The lad is from a wealthy home, while the lass is a street urchin from the wrong side of the tracks. Yet their faerie souls refuse to be separated. After the rich parents confine the boy to his room, except for school or in between, the characters have to act as go betweens for the couple. Perhaps the chauffeur is an enemy they'll need to avoid. Worse, kept from his ladylove, the lad may begin to forget his true nature. How will the players manage to protect the young wilders in love without injuring the mortals? To add some icing to the cake, perhaps the lad's parents are high-tech sorcerers; maybe the Sneakers could be introduced to the chronicle as they help the players pull off a *Mission: Impossible* rescue.

Rich Fae, Poor Fae

One of the player characters is given a promotion at her office. This is wonderful, except now she's the supervisor of one of the local sidhe nobles, and he doesn't like it one bit. Away from the office, he gives her no end of grief, from setting her on impossible tasks to letting the local redcaps and pooka send some nasty tricks her way. What will the character do? How will these difficulties affect her job and her mortal life? How will the other player characters intervene to help their friend?





CHAPTER FIVE: NAMES, FACES AND PLACES

You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world.

— Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditation*

The People

He makes no friend who never made a foe.

— Tennyson, *Lancelot and Elaine*

From Gloria's Journal:

If I have learned nothing else these few months, it's that certain persons always stand out in a crowd. They're not always the most beautiful, nor are they the wittiest people around, which comes as a great surprise to me. But these folks are the ones who somehow make a difference, for better or worse. Before I complete my journey back to the Dreaming, I want to detail some commoners from all walks of life and spheres of influence; they're Seelie and Unseelie, representing a wide array of political spectrums and kith. These are people I met or heard mentioned so many times, I felt as if I knew them well.

Conservatives

Conservatives are the commoner counterparts to sidhe Traditionalists. Most conservatives believe in the innate rights of the sidhe to rule, just like the good old days. They tend to be cautious and set in their ways. But just because they're politically stuck in the past doesn't mean they're unimaginative or a bunch of cavalier do-gooders. These people are some of the more outspoken and well-known commoner conservatives from Concordia and abroad.

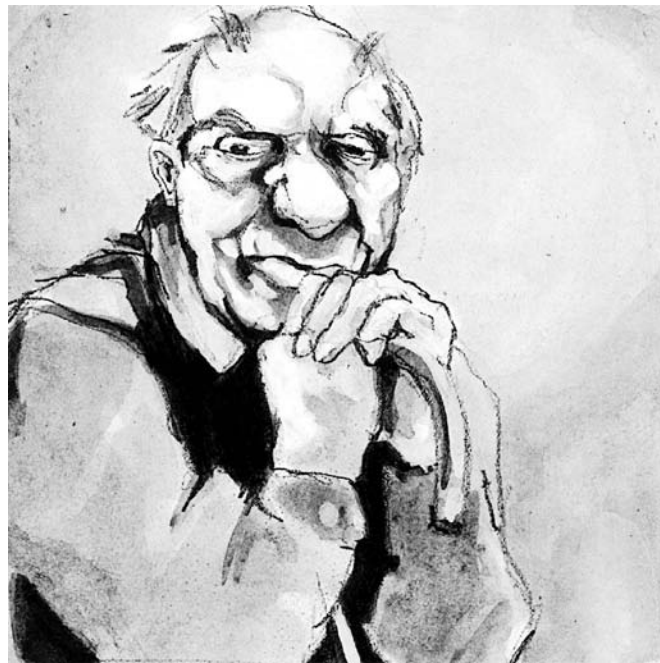


Dewey St. John Flanders

Many commoners respect and honor the sidhe; Dewey St. John Flanders worships them. He's polite to boggans, but little else, I might add. Of course, being a satyr, he's terribly fond of sidhe beauty, but Dewey is also a strong admirer of the propriety of sidhe leadership. As a staunch conservative in the Parliament of Dreams (and he actually prefers to be considered a Traditionalist, to use the sidhe term), Dewey points to the many accomplishments the Shining Host have made both before the Shattering and after the Resurgence. Where would the Kithain be without the Peace of Concordia? Haven't dozens, nay, hundreds of lost freeholds and trods been discovered because of the sidhe's return? Is not the will of the Dreaming apparent from their victory in the Accordance War? In the Parliament, Dewey is known as a shrewd politician and a master of the filibuster; his words are as fine as his deep-timbered voice. What he doesn't know is that he has drawn the enmity of the Ranters and the respect of the Catacomb Club, at least according to Crazy Aeddie, a self-proclaimed member of the Shadow Court (see **Chapter Two: Natural Orders**). The latter may attempt to recruit Dewey St. John Flanders if he were to be ennobled; many members of the Club think it's only a matter of time. The Ranters, on the other hand, find him disgusting and the worst of fawning, conservative commoners. Dewey had best watch out, for members of either of these two groups would have good reason to make contact with Dewey, to proposition him or set him up for a fall.

Gwilym, Seneschal of Gwynedd

According to people who have been across the pond, Gwilym is one of a long line of commoner seneschals "holding down the fort" for the Kithain in Wales. Cymru, as the land is known, is a fragmented realm; Gwilym hopes that soon, a high king or queen will return who can lead the Welsh fae as a united people to a new Spring. Many nobles of the realm,



such as Dylan, Prince of Dyfed, value his opinions and wisdom. Now as twilight settles around him, the old boggan feels the weight of finding a successor for his office sooner rather than later. Gwilym still prays, though, that he will see a new High King or Queen of Cymru in his waning lifetime. He is currently trying to meet with nobles of House Gwydion, hoping that a new ruler will emerge from those ranks to rule the Falcon's ancestral home. One other rumor I heard suggested that Gwilym may even travel to House Gwydion strongholds in Concordia to find a ruler for Cymru.

(For more information on Gwilym, see **Isle of the Mighty**).

Laurette Pascinale

When the sidhe returned during the Resurgence, it was a dream come true for a young raccoon pooka named Laurette, or so she told me over a cup of coffee in the Kingdom of Apples. The leader of her local barony in the Kingdom of Northern Ice gladly welcomed a Fiona ruler, Sir Aethelred. The knight in turn made several baronial commoners members of his personal staff. Laurette had heard many wonderful tales about the beauty and majesty of the sidhe, and kind Sir Aethelred lived up to the legends. He dubbed her a page and garnered much amusement from her cunning tricks; as a good knight should, Aethelred taught his page the basics of heraldry, archery, horseback riding and swordplay. In fact, he and his household of sidhe and commoners were enjoying the beauty of an early spring when word of the Beltaine massacre reached the barony. Aethelred was horrified, but before he could discover more details or calm his people, a pair of redcaps and a sluagh murdered him. Laurette's world came crashing down. She left the Kingdom of Northern Ice on May 4, 1970, and has never returned. The pooka made her way south where she joined Lord Dafyll's forces. No one had the heart to turn away such a determined young warrior, and she proved her mettle quickly. Laurette was a whiz at spying on the enemy and so innocent looking, she was never suspected



of being a double agent. Now, many years have passed, and the childling has become an aging wilder. Laurette has spent time since the Accordance War training other warriors in the arts of subterfuge. This pooka probably could give Intrepid a run for his money; she's never without a trick or a crafty plan. Anyone who needs advice on infiltration, imposture or espionage would find her a valuable ally.

General LYROS, formerly of 4th Troll Commons Infantry

Well past his prime, Lyros is still one of the finest troll warriors in Concordia. He is not a revolutionary at heart, but valiantly led the 4th Troll Commons Infantry during the Accordance War; many commoners hope in vain for any signs of further rebel ten-



dencies from the General. Personally, I don't think that day will come. His no-nonsense and cut-to-the-chase manner of thinking and speaking endears him to commoners and sidhe Reformers alike. Lyros believes High King David to be a good and just monarch and would support him without question. Lyros' other claim to fame is being the father of Duke Topaz, ruler of the Kingdom of the Feathered Snake. The General's enemies include the sidhe Traditionalist Duke Dray and the Beltaine Blade.

(For more information on Lyros, see **Nobles: The Shining Host**).

Malakson Halvdan Brightskull

Ever the devoted servant, the *lios alfar* Malakson is a *huskarl*, or bondsfæ, of the Jarl of Jutland in the mortal land of Denmark. Wise, brave and stalwart, he's a pretty stereotypical troll wilder, except that he has an unusual mission — serving as an ambassador to the Court of Neustria. Malakson is, of course, a perfect choice. Yes, really! I know it's true that commoners aren't much more than prized servants in Neustria, but how could anyone think Malakson was irresponsible or undignified? While he believes completely in the harmonious government of his homeland, which links nobles and commoners in joint rule, the troll also supports sidhe sovereignty. He dislikes the circumstances in the Galacian Confederation that have occasionally forced sidhe to flee for their lives. Although Malakson feels the King of Neustria is sometimes a bit heavy-handed, he understands that a ruler must be strong and firm. In his rare moments of free time, the troll is a skilled armorer, producing brigantine mail and stout shields that are as beautiful as they are dependable. I know because I used to own one of his round shields; now I doubt I could even pick it up. Malakson does hold the rank of knight, the traditional honor for an ambassador, but he prefers not to use his title except on the most formal occasions. He might be a good contact for anyone journeying to Neustria or Jutland.





King Morwyd of Mist

Though he loves the flying machines and microchips of the modern age, Morwyd is at heart a traditional fae. He adores his Seelie sidhe queen, Karolinda, and is actually quite a good monarch of the Kingdom of Mist. Unlike other lands, in this place the tradition of dividing the year in twain, half for Seelie and half for Unseelie, hasn't been forgotten. The nocker is the Winter King, ruling from Samhain to Beltaine. Morwyd also adheres to other customs, such as punishing farmers who forget to leave out cream and bread for the little people. I find all this hard to believe, but Kalana has met him and assures me it's true.

(For more information on Morwyd, see *Isle of the Mighty*).

Upala Sengupta

From her native India, Upala has traveled through much of Europe, Africa and Asia. She has recently come to Concordia where her personal mission remains the same: locating Kithain children who would otherwise be lost to the Dreaming, due to lack of Glamour, Banal parents or the Dauntain. Barely past childhood herself, this young and idealistic eshu is nonetheless fluent in about four languages and ever conversant in the universal tongue of compassion. Upala will go to any length to save children from danger. Because she believes that strong and dedicated leadership of the Kithain can further her goals, she generally supports the sidhe; after all, they seem to be doing a good job overall. Upala understands that High King David has forbidden his subjects to confront Dauntain directly, and she has great respect for this fae monarch who stands for egalitarian rule. However, she sometimes believes that a frontal attack is the best and quickest way to rescue the Dauntain's victims. So far, the eshu has been lucky; she's not yet fallen prey to her enemies. However, I find it impossible to believe they've ignored Upala's meddling; they're probably just waiting for a good time to capture and question her. Because she is being considered for membership in the Order of Eiliethya (see the *Changeling Players Guide*), rumor has it that Upala has also drawn the enmity of the Monkey's Paw and the



Beltaine Blade. I wish she could find a patron who would support her cause, for it is most noble and courageous.

Moderates

Moderates, not unlike sidhe Reformers, want to take the middle ground. Many are willing to dally in consensus politics to preserve the peace and protect all Kithain. Others simply don't care much for politics and just want to manage their own business in peace and quiet; playing both ends of the political spectrum allows them this freedom.

Densloe Maddingsley

While most fae, like me, would find statistics and number crunching horribly Banal, Densloe Maddingsley finds facts



and figures engrossing; he believes there's a sort of magic in it. Mathematics, he says, has a beauty all its own, and so do words, he's quick to add. This boggan is an information broker; he runs a research firm that conducts phone surveys, interviews and statistical analyses. In the archives of his company are millions and millions of pieces of data about people from all walks of life. Densloe also has special files on Kithain and other unusual beings. While fair and sympathetic to the needs of his fellow changelings, he's also a businessman and charges for his services. Usually his price is more information, but he's more than willing to accept cold hard cash. The boggan probably darts equally between the Seelie and Unseelie parts of his nature, but he's popular with many nobles and commoners alike. If they deal with Densloe, they know they're getting good service and excellent quality. Anyone who needed to get some quick dirt on another changeling should make an appointment with Densloe. Of course, they'd better be prepared to meet his asking price.

Fitz McArthur

Just north of the Duchy of Goldengate in the Kingdom of Pacifica, Fitz runs his small publishing empire (well, cottage industry, anyway). The old nocker is unequalled in his skill at bookbinding and printing; he is responsible for publishing the chimerical travel guides of Kalana Tomas and is in heavy demand for printing invitations and announcements for fae across Concordia. Fitz's materials are the finest, and he has an artist's eye for beauty and detail. Never mind that occasion misspellings creep into the text; to have his unique lavender paper, which blossoms into a full-grown plant after watering, is well worth a misspelling. Fitz has several apprentices, a bookkeeper/housemanager and several chimera at his small freehold. He's grumpy and bad tempered, but perhaps less so than many nockers. At present, he's keeping his eyes and ears open for someone to become his assistant master craftsman, perhaps chosen from the apprentices, perhaps among unknown talent. Fitz likes



originality and ingenuity above all else; if someone can show him a unique process, he'll be impressed. Other fae can meet Fitz if they visit his freehold or if they're sent by their local nobles to pick up specialty items from the nocker. Appointments are always a good idea.

Kalana Tomas

Kalana decided early in her life that she needed a better way to spread her tales. Like most eshu, she wandered a good deal and became quite knowledgeable about languages, cultures and customs. Much of what she learned was interesting without the usual elaboration and embroidery on the truth, but how could she share this knowledge with the most people? One day Kalana saw a TV show about tourism, and then she had her answer. Now the eshu writes travel guides, especially with an eye to fae readers, that tell of hidden wonders and special places. Few mortals can see the guides since they're chimerical, printed by a nocker publishing firm. Of course all the finest Kithain booksellers keep them in stock, not an easy feat considering their popularity. I actually used to own a copy of her British Isles guide, and it was pretty keen stuff. Kalana tends to write in marvelous detail about the things mundane travel guides ignore — Glamour, mortal inspiration and trods. Of course she includes reams of information on good food, drink and music. Kalana's nocker friends are trying to get her to make a web page accessible only to Kithain, and she's giving the matter serious consideration. People looking for a nifty place to visit, sights to see and places to stay should consult Kalana. She may also have useful information about history associated with a particular point of interest.

Marina of Beacon Hills

I don't know whether to think I'm blessed or cursed by having Marina as a friend. She's said precious little about what happened to her in the Dreaming, but boggans have shrewder minds than



they're given credit for. So, I think I might have figured out what was going on behind the scenes, just from the bits and pieces I have gleaned from her. Once upon a time, Marina the satyr was a carefree young musician. She flitted from party to party, singing with the voice of a diva, without a concern in the world. Then, the Countess of Beacon Hills, a noble lady not given to idle chatter, asked the satyr to journey into the Dreaming on a quest. The commoner accepted, thinking it was an easy task to pick up a certain book at the Countess' behest. In the Dreaming, though, Marina made the mistake of losing a riddle contest to the book's owner, a sage named Cruithne Alexis. At first, she thought her life was forfeit, but the old man merely proposed to demand her services from time to time. As token of her fealty to him, Cruithne gave the satyr access to his immense library and a magical ring of some kind. My guess is the ring allows Marina to enter the Dreaming whenever she is in a flower garden; perhaps its powers are even greater, for all I know. Marina seems to have found Cruithne to be a rather self-centered fellow but appreciative of her own love of lore. The sage, of course, is not what he seems, though for the life of me, I don't know what his game is. Thus far, however, I think Cruithne Alexis has been pleased with the satyr's work; I have no doubt he is especially looking forward to reading more about the history of the Kithain, noble and commoner alike. Eventually, not soon, of course, I would like to help her get free from the slimy old fellow's clutches.

Morlee Wharton

Tea parties have become a vaunted custom among the sluagh, and little Morlee Wharton's mentor taught him the skill of serving a proper English tea soon after the boy's Chrysalis. Never mind that other Kithain found a sluagh tea party a bit creepy; Morlee was a determined student, dead set on making a good name for his skills. Now a wilder, the sluagh has a fine reputation for doing up a tea just right, even among non-sluagh, with antique porcelain, cucumbersandwiches and the perfect iced layer cake. Don't worry,

everything is quite clean and proper. He also chooses the most appropriate teas for the occasion, whether delicate Darjeeling or smoky Earl Grey. Morlee shows up at the scheduled event, prepares the tea and serves it with the skill of an English butler. Then, he quietly curls up under the serving cart and waits. In addition to having the reputation of serving excellent teas, the sluagh is a respected spy among his own kith. He's so unobtrusive and quiet, most of the guests forget he's there. Their cups are never empty and all is so neat and orderly, Morlee seems almost invisible. Of course he's sometimes asked to leave the room, particularly by royals, but he can still hear plenty while waiting in a convenient drainpipe or heat duct. What fun it would be to hire him out to spy on some of the Eiluned! On the other hand, whose to say he's not already working for them?

Obrey Redwine

I'd never heard of the piskies until a sluagh recommended a trip south; now, I'm glad for the tip. This piskey wilder nominally makes his home in the Kingdom of White Sands, where the Kendricks and Moxford Circus spends the winter training and making repairs. Obrey usually visits Queen Morganna's court, bringing messages and getting new ones to deliver when the circus goes on the move in the fall. By trade he's a horse trainer and usually tends to all the animals' care and feeding; most of the performers swear by his liniment when it comes to healing sore muscles. He gave me a bottle, and it's worked wonders. The piskey also serves as a clown when needed, and on occasion, he's sprinkled the cotton candy with something special, letting kids see his fae form. Okay, so it's technically a violation of the Escheat, but so what? The children love it. Among the changelings, Obrey is a trusted messenger. If he says he'll deliver something, he'll keep his word, even though speedy jobs aren't his specialty. What fewer Kithain know is that Obrey has contacts among several Prodigals, including these folks called the Silent Walkers, Hollow People and Gangrel. He told me



that there was a strange carnival that showed up from time to time in Concordia with fae and some other creatures, too, and asked me to keep an eye open for it. Anyone who gets a chance to watch the Kendricks and Moxford Circus should also take some time to meet Obrey.

Portia Jessup

The Baroness of Silver Lakes in the Kingdom of Grass had a problem shortly after the end of the Accordance War. Most of the commoners in her fief accepted the terms of the Treaty of Concord and settled down under her stern but prosperous rule. Then there were a few, mostly pooka and satyr childlings, who couldn't stop making waves. Calling themselves the Tumbleweeds, they cast wayward cantrips and went to great lengths to disrupt the normal activities of the baronial

court. Of course they stopped short of making Ilyria of House Gwydion, the Baroness of Silver Lakes, look bad, but they held nothing else sacrosanct. No minor disciplinary measures worked, and finally, the baroness had had enough. It was probably an overreaction, now that I think about it. She chose one from their number, a small delicate fawn pooka named Portia, to stay in Silver Lakes; the rest she shipped off to court in the neighboring Duchy of Plums, only about 10 miles away. She didn't want the children to be separated from their mortal parents, after all. The Tumbleweeds were stricken with the thought of leaving Portia behind in the supposedly evil clutches of Baroness Ilyria; their behavior improved a great deal in their new home, however. Portia, meanwhile, was a little scared of being the sole Tumbleweed in Silver Lakes; she didn't realize that hurting her would be the last thing on earth the Baroness would do. The pooka still keeps in touch with the Tumbleweeds through her pet chimera, a butterfly-sized deer fly that talks incessantly and is generally a pain.

Things have recently gotten much more interesting for the childling. First of all, the young girl will soon enter wilderhood, the sweet summer of her life. Second, her friends in the Duchy of Plums have been using her to get information on the Baroness; they have entered into the employ of the Duke, a man named Ashana of House Eiluned. Portia has no idea that her friends have been delivering all of her innocent gossip about Ilyria straight to Ashana's pointy ears. On the other hand, the pooka may well become a willing accomplice. Right now she's far more useful to the Duke as an unknowing spy. Those who visit the Barony of Silver Lakes (Monona, Wisconsin) or the Duchy of Plums (Madison) might be able to see Portia and give her a hand. I worry that something might happen to her, which would break the Baroness' heart.

Vlad Rogvodov

A resident of the Kingdom of Apples, Vlad is an irredeemably Unseelie member of the Parliament of Dreams. That said, he's also a bit unusual for his kith in that he's quite interested



in politics, redcaps not being too savvy in the quick-thinking department. What he lacks in subtlety Vlad makes up for in enthusiasm. He never misses a meeting, serves on whatever committee will take him and can always be counted on to express an opinion. What Vlad wants is more representation for the Unseelie in the Parliament. He correctly points out that as Unseelie are essentially half the fae population, they should receive half the votes. The redcap wouldn't mind proportional representation for commoners, either, but he had no particular gripe against the sidhe. What gets him riled is that all the Seelie goody two-shoes seem to deny the duality of the Kithain soul. I couldn't agree with him more on this, though I generally prefer the Seelie Court. Vlad's discussion of metaphysics doesn't go much beyond that basic statement, but more and more Unseelie are beginning to sit up and take notice of what he's saying. Vlad's favorite hangout is the Olive Branch, a pub that serves up lots of cold meats and cheese on delicious wooden plates, not too far from the Parliament's meeting chambers. Most nights, other Kithain could find him there, munching dinner; any Unseelie might get some inspiration from his words.

Radicals, Outlaws and Naughty Pakes

Visionaries and lunatics, these folks are extremists among the Kithain. Some are downright evil, while others just have an outlook that's slightly different from the average changeling, say, a few steps left of the sidhe Modernists. Similar to the conservatives, believe it or not, most of these fae are single minded in their focus; unlike the moderates, they're not usually willing to bend or compromise their beliefs.

Eneas "Bloody Thread" Zoetope

Once upon a time, a mortal maid went hiking in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. When she didn't return home to her

friends and family, everyone assumed the worst, and sure enough, her maimed body was discovered on a back trail a few days later. Forensic science seemed to indicate that her body had been partially devoured by a large carnivore, perhaps a bear; there actually wasn't much left to analyze. Eneas, her brother and a satyr, knew better. The dead girl was his Kinain sister Clio, a student of anthropology like himself. Together they'd studied myths and legends of many different cultures, especially those of the Native Americans who had lived in the Northeast, with an eye to learning more about changelings. Eneas knew a hungry Rock Giant in its Winter aspect had killed his sister. Shortly before Clio was buried, he cut off a hank of her long, black hair. Once a gentle scholar, poet and romantic, Eneas became cruel and bloodthirsty, out for revenge against all the Nunnehi. Now he travels and searches for them, brutally killing whoever he finds, youngling, brave or elder, no matter what Nation or Family. On each body he leaves a strand of Clio's hair which on first inspection looks like a bloody strand of thread, hence the killer's nickname. Before his disappearance, High King David was deeply disturbed by the reports of Nunnehi slayings and had assembled a motley to investigate the deaths. Needless to say, the Nunnehi are none too calm about the matter, either. I met Eneas, and my heart goes out to him. He is a pitiful Kithain who has been totally consumed by his dark inner urges, but of course this is no excuse for his actions. He needs to be stopped, and if we don't contain him ourselves, perhaps the Nunnehi could send someone to work with us. Actually, putting an end to Eneas may be the best opportunity we Kithain have to mend our fences with our Native American cousins.

Mr. Foster

Note to self: Heard this second hand from another pooka, so my readers will just have to make up their own minds. So what happens when mortals come in droves to that special grove?

Mr. Foster has always liked the forest. When he was a prickly young fae, none of the other children would play with him; his sharp quills hurt too much. So Mr. Foster amused himself alone,

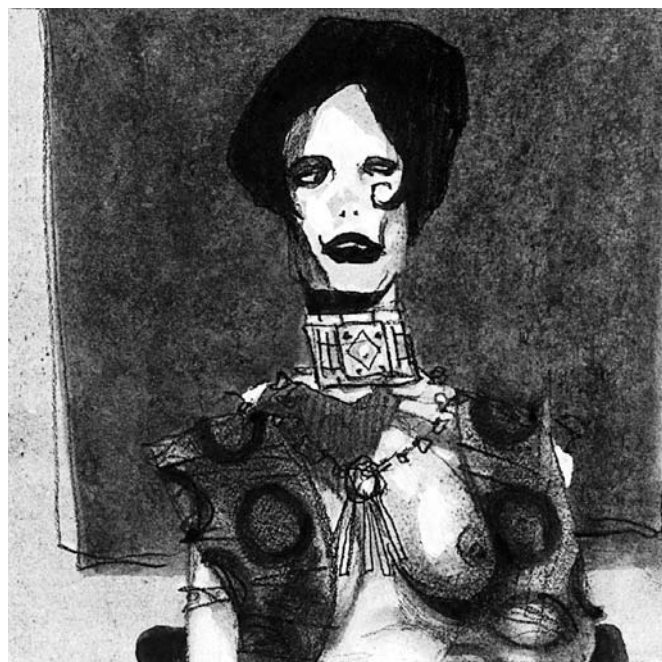


among the trees; they became his friends and were never mean to him. Over the years, he noticed how many of his friends were being cut down by those wretched timber companies. That was a bad thing! Worse, some human children liked to go into the woods and play with matches. Mr. Foster didn't like fires, and he thought those human kids were being very naughty. On the other hand, he didn't want to hurt the children. So, being a whiz at the Primal Art, Mr. Foster now puts the bad kids out of harm's way *and* finds a way to help his friends, the trees. Mr. Foster thinks of his little project as reforestation; where once no trees stood, there are now a dozen or so beautiful young birches, willows and firs. Plus, the children won't grow old so quickly; they'll stay young and lovely for decades. Of course, the parents go crazy with worry over their missing offspring. Mr. Foster isn't evil *per se*, but he is extremely misguided.

Gruach of Dalriada

Once a talented spy, Gruach is now the lover and advisor of King Ross of Dalriada in Caledonia (Scotland). She's given no reasons why she forsook on her former employer, Duke Leyden of House Fiona, but she seems truly devoted to Ross. On the other hand, this dark sluagh beauty must surely have a secret agenda; in the past, she's been linked with the Shadow Court, thieves and assassins. Surely all her fancy jewels don't come from the King.

(For more information on the lovely but deadly Gruach, see *Isle of the Mighty*).



The Hellion

This vicious creature is the leader of Emma's Little Helpers, a group of outspoken, over-the-edge female redcaps (see **Chapter Two: Natural Orders**). No one knows if the Hellion was hurt or abused at some point in the past, but she grew up with an intense distaste for most males, fae and mortal alike. Her favorite targets are young, smart-aleck boys; she likes to beat the crap out of them and make them fear for their, ahem,



anatomies. I find this despicable. Mind you, I have nothing against young ladies, but young men are pretty fine too! It's wrong to go around maiming them when a good sting of a rapier across the bottom will teach them a thing or two. The part that riles me is that the redcap takes particular delight in ridiculing the more attractive and stuck-up sidhe wilders. Some of the Hellion's friends whisper that she has friends among the Prodigals known as Black Furies. Justified or not, the truth is that the redcap is close to being a bit of a psycho. Whereas once she was an avenging devil for mortal women who were hurt and helpless, now the Hellion looks for any excuse to attack. She's a hair's breadth away from being declared an outlaw; even the Shadow Court doesn't particularly want to deal with her. I think something should be done about her, and tomorrow may not be soon enough.

Ragnild von Folkke

In fall 1970, a nocker childling watched in terror as brightly clad sidhe warriors destroyed her home. It was a clock shop, full of tinkles, jangles and merry tick tocks, a wonderful place to learn of the magic of the Kithain. Worse for the young changeling was the sight of her nocker father defending his workshop with his last breath, as he fell in death from a noble's sword. Perhaps the sidhe warriors had reasons of their own for a waging a battle that left no survivors; maybe they too had suffered untold horrors. None of this mattered to the little nocker, as she hid for her life and cried silently that night. The next day, she came out of hiding, made her way from Freiberg to Munich and joined the Silver Rose, a commoner motley dedicated to challenging sidhe rulership and ending the nobles' oppression. The girl forgot her old name and was thereafter called Ragnild von Folkke, or "wise guardian of the people." In the end, the skills of Ragnild and her nocker friends paid off; their awesome machines turned the tide against the sidhe in the Five Years' War. Ragnild was one of the co-founders of the Galacian Confederation and has sat on the Diet, the elected rul-



ing council of the Bavarian League, several times. In her heart, Ragnild has tried to forgive the sidhe for the murder of her father, but she still can't bring herself to trust them. Nockers may have good reason to visit Ragnild's magnificent clockworks; any commoners interested in learning more about the Confederation would find interesting conversation with this radical. It was well worth the plane ticket to make her acquaintance.

Riel, Spymaster of King Meilge of Willows

This sluagh wilder is a snake through and through. I'm not sure what he's really up to, but he panders to the dark whims of King Meilge. It wouldn't surprise me if he were involved in

plotting against the monarch, which is terrible considering how much High Queen Faerilyth needs her mentor right now. Because of recent events involving the disappearance of High King David, Riel is in a position of power and knows it. I mean, he was there the night the High King vanished. King Meilge also seems to rely on him. This sluagh's going to milk the situation for all it's worth, too.

(For more information on Riel, see **The Kingdom of Willows**).

Duke Toren na Gulon

Hell, no, I didn't meet him! I'm no fool. But I heard endless stories about him. A powerful Unseelie warlord, the Iron Duke Toren na Gulon has much in common with the wolverine that is his personal totem. This old troll is fierce and tenacious in battle, with incredible toughness and an ability to turn on an attacker even when at a disadvantage. Many people have made the mistake of thinking Toren na Gulon was down for good when they've felt a steel blade slice their spines. The outlaw has a personal guard of nine rough and rowdy redcaps, known as the Iron Brigade because of their iron-soled boots and sharp spears tipped with the same metal. This self-proclaimed duke, for of course no noble would give him such a title, maintains a large mountain freehold in the Kingdom of the Burning Sun. His fortress is built from huge oak timbers and looks like an old Norse meadhall. Na Gulon loves to fight and will gladly go to war with anyone who pisses him off. Worse, he's frequently put on retainer by Unseelie fae and members of the Shadow Court. Often the threat of his allegiance is sufficient for his "liege" to scare off enemies; na Gulon's reputation is enough to make even the toughest sidhe warrior pause in deep thought. I've heard that some nobles have sent retainers on reconnaissance to the troll's fortress, but they'd be nuts to fight him alone. Unseelie fae may find lucrative employment under the Iron Duke, much as I hate to admit it.



The Places

*No foreign sky protected me,
no stranger's wing shielded my face.
I stand as witness to the common lot,
survivor of that time, that place.*

— Anna Akhmatova, *Requiem*

From A Book of Common Luxuries by Kalana Tomas:

A lot of commoners hang in places quite different than their sidhe cousins. It's not that there's anything wrong with art museums or espresso shops, it's just that those places don't encourage folks to let their hair down. Leaving initials carved on the table in an expensive restaurant is a no-no, whereas at the Dragon's Den, it's commonplace and accepted. Following are a few locales that welcome commoners and consider them prized customers.

Binah's Bazaar

Between the Near and Far Dreaming stands Binah's Bazaar, an open-air market that harkens back to old Istanbul. First, visitors smell the scents: cardamom, cinnamon and coriander. Then there are the sounds of camels grunting, the call of bargain prices and strains of music from every instrument imaginable. Shoppers can find just about anything they seek at the bazaar, from cheap scarves to priceless gems and weapons. Bargaining is a must; it's considered an insult if the shopper doesn't at least try to do a little haggling. If hungry, patrons can choose from conventional grilled beef and chicken kebabs to more exotic dishes such as pastourma (seasoned camel) and loukhouns (throat-soothing sweet candies). The bazaar on any given day has about 100 booths set up; additionally, Binah himself has a large private pavilion. Nearby, patrons can recline on soft pillows and carpets, enjoying cold lemonade. Binah, an eshu of some age, has run the bazaar for many years. He's a little on the plump side, always impeccably dressed in brightly striped robes and curly-toed leather boots. It's rumored that within his private tent, shadier deals are made for exotic poisons, chimera and possibly even slaves. However, even to the humblest childling, he is polite and congenial, commanding an air of respect. Everyone should find a trip to the bazaar an exciting venture.

Caer Flamingo Botanical and Butterfly Gardens

The Botanical and Butterfly Gardens were a whim of Queen Morganna of the Kingdom of White Sands. She had this magnificent place built, visited a time or two, then seemingly forgot about it; what Morganna would never admit is that she intended it to be a private park for commoners. She put a boggan horticulturist named Maria Hernando and a nocker called Paulo Juarez in charge of maintaining the place, and all agree they've done an excellent job. The gardens are thematically arranged; for example, there's a rose garden, an herbal garden and a greenhouse that features only native tropical orchids. Even more exciting is the butterfly garden, a section of bright

annuals and perennials that attract countless butterflies in spring and summer. Visitors can sit on short benches among the plants for hours watching the winged insects. Thanks to Paulo's skills, there's even a special place for sluagh, an underground section that houses deadly nightshade, carnivorous plants and death's head moths; special ultraviolet lamps give the plants what light they need without being too bright for the sluagh. No permission is needed to visit the gardens, though most folks pay their respects to the Queen when they're in town.

The Dragon's Den

Aldo Scarlett and his wife Betta are the proprietors of the Dragon's Den, an inn and tavern in the Far Dreaming. The inn itself is similar to an old Tudor-style house with a thatched roof, open-beam construction and diamond-pane windows. Betta, a boggan like her husband, has added some special additions, such as window boxes planted with rosemary and thyme, glass door knobs and a couple of big oak tubs. The couple shares all the responsibilities for running the inn, though Aldo tends to be the better cook; Betta's strengths are in organization and finishing details. The inn has about 10 rooms which can hold three people each; when times are crowded, visitors can sleep by the tavern fire. The tavern has about five long wooden tables and plenty of benches. Aldo will even share his tobacco, while Betta has been known to give a weary traveler a back rub and foot soak. Both boggans like to tell stories about the fearsome but unseen dragon that dwells on the mountain just north of the inn. If troublemakers show up, the couple have a signal to alert some nearby trolls; twice a day, the boggans are supposed to ring the big bell in the inn's garden. If it's not sounded, the trolls know to come check on things. So far the system has worked well for everyone; the trolls get good grub and the boggans have some ready guardians. The inn is a great place for trading gossip, songs and stories; should the locals hear about visitors from the mortal lands, the place will be packed.

Today's Menu

Fresh bread and honey butter

Cold milk

Homebrew ale

Venison on a stick, with apples,

onions and bacon

Plum tart

Aged white cheddar cheese

*Traveler's sack fare: Red apples, hunk
of yellow cheese, small loaf of bread,*

beef jerky



Arcadia Gateway

Close to the Dreaming yet apart from it is a realm called the Umbra. The Umbra contains countless netherlands traversed by the Prodigal Garou, sorcerers and spirits; it is a vast and complex place. One of the Near Realms in the Umbra which connects directly to the Dreaming is a spot called Arcadia Gateway. The Fianna have several paths to this place, as do some among the Get of Fenris and Black Furies, so at any given time, a werewolf or two might be in this realm. The Arcadia Gateway has some features of interest to commoners as well. First of all, most of the fae in the realm are Lost Ones or true fae; in fact, a Seelie Lord and an Unseelie Lady have divided the realm and co-rule it. While the fae in this realm have forgotten much of the true Arcadia and know little of the mortal lands, they are still powerful and wise. Second, the meandering woods, trails and streams around Arcadia's Gateway are full of commoners whose main love is tricking any mortals or Garou that happen to come along. It's a pooka's paradise and fun for everyone else, too; the werewolves of course don't know as much as they think they know about the fae. Their attempts to make bargains and gain the upper hand provide hours of amusement, provided they don't get too pissed.

(Rumors abound that a secret entrance to Arcadia itself exists somewhere in this realm; possibly it's through a lost trail in the forest or perhaps in a maze under one of the two great castles. If such an entrance exists, this could be a dazzling way to conclude a chronicle, allowing the player characters to return to Arcadia. Storytellers should think carefully on whether or not they want to have a bona-fide way for characters to find their way home to the faerie lands, or just use Arcadia Gateway as an interesting place to visit. For more information on Arcadia Gateway and its denizens, see *Umbra: The Velvet Shadow* for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*).

Epilogue

There are a terrible lot of lies going about the world, and the worst of it is that half of them are true.

— Winston Churchill

The boggan pulled herself up the steps of the ancient castle, both eager and afraid. Behind came Marina, instinctively letting her friend have a few moments lead, to reflect, wonder or remember. Less than a year and a day. Sunlit mornings learning how to make biscuits with other boggans. Evenings of candles and shadows when satyrs with fiery tongues spoke of rebellion that

would never come. Dark nights of redcaps, sluagh and nockers plotting around the campfire. Lazy afternoons listening to trolls, eshu and even pooka tell their stories in fields of flowers and butterflies. Gloria hurried now because she feared that soon mere talk would turn to war. Her people needed her, and she no longer meant only commoners. Or only sidhe, for that matter.

The fortress was the same as she remembered, and as she entered the main hall with its vaulted ceilings, Cruithne Alexis was waiting for her. Gloria wasn't surprised to find the sage hadn't aged a day. He looked at her with his peculiar eyes, greenish-gold, like a cat. They gleamed in the light of the roaring fire.

"So you've returned, little boggan. In less time than I had expected. Do you have what I required of you?"

Silently, the boggan placed a pouch at his feet, pulling out its contents one by one. First she held up a scented book bound in red cloth with silver laces. "These are the *Annals of House Fiona*, the work of my own hand." As her fingers fanned the pages, rosemary, lavender and lemon thyme scents wafted from the handmade paper. Next she held up a green leather-bound volume with golden clasps. Magnificent tooling graced the cover with falcons, swords and ostrich plumes. "This is *The Way of House Gwydion*, written by many of their finest scholars." Her hands then laid out a pile of envelopes, full of notes, clippings and sketches. "House Liam are exiles and though they have historians, none has put forth a bound history. These, however, are their tales of a long and honorable past." The boggan struggled with her next burden, thin sheets of gold pressed into a raised pattern of wheels and hammers. Black ribbon bindings were stark against the bright metal. Inside, the pages were plain, the words neatly typed by a machine. "I had a great deal of trouble deciphering the House Dougal code, or rather, getting someone to do it for me," said the boggan. "But this is a genuine copy of *A Journeyman's Guidebook to House Dougal*, by Baron Weyland." The boggan then pulled out a sheaf of papers tied with string. "This is a handwritten copy of my travels with the commoners, and of course I have the original. This lacks only binding to make it complete." She paused.

"And what of the fifth house?" said the sage impatiently. "Have you brought me nothing of House Eiluned?"

"Well, yes," she replied, finally holding out a black plastic diskette. It looked alien and ugly in the medieval surroundings.

Cruithne sneered. "What is this toy? Where is the history I desired?"

"That's it," she replied, "or at least as much as I could get of *On the Ways of House Eiluned* by Dr. Thomas Lagarri. House Eiluned, you see, guards this manuscript more jealously than any other house does their own. I couldn't figure how to break their code. But all you said I had to bring were the histories. You didn't say they had to be books or anything. So I think that's a pretty legitimate copy, considering." The boggan shrank into the floor as much as she was able, catching sight of a cringing Marina just out of the corner of her eye.

Cruithne Alexis stared at it for a long time. Then he began to laugh, a throaty, hoarse laughter that made the boggan's hair stand on end.

"Well, well, so it seems you have picked up some wisdom over these past months," he said, finally stifling his mirth. "Never fear, little one, I will find a way to read their secrets. So, now I suppose you want to wear your original form once more? No second thoughts? Don't tell me you're ashamed to be a commoner now that you've walked in one's shoes."

The boggan looked down at her apple green slippers which were decorated by bright clumps of purple silk lettuce. "No, I'm not ashamed to be a boggan. But I am sorry for what the sidhe have done and thought. If I regain my true form, I swear by my life's blood that I will do something to right the wrongs. I don't mean forcing conservative commoners to become rebels, or radicals to become complacent. Rather, I want to continue my journeys as I have done, salving old wounds and building bridges between noble and commoner, Seelie and Unseelie alike. And..." she glanced to Marina, "perhaps shake up the Shining Host a bit while I'm at it."

The sage threw a vial of blue liquid at her feet, and she picked it up with a callused hand. "Drink the potion, little boggan, and regain your stature once more," said Cruithne, watching her closely.

Slowly and deliberately, she uncorked the vial, smelling salt and something she couldn't put her finger on. The potion was bitter, and only with difficulty did she swallow the whole mess. And then she felt as if a dozen ropes clenched at her flesh; the pain was burning and seeped through her whole body. Biting her lips, grinding her teeth, the girl didn't cry out; she'd be damned if she showed the old sage how much it hurt. Presently, the pain subsided, and Julia of House Fiona peered out of her own eyes once more. Her garments were tattered; all that remained whole were the green slippers on her feet. Julia turned and started to disrobe when the hall door flew open.

There on the threshold stood a sidhe knight. An ebony velvet surcote, beautifully embroidered with silver crescents, hung over form-fitted leather armor. His black silky hair fell in thick waves around his broad shoulders, and he stood even taller than Julia. A naked sword was outstretched in his gloved hand.

"I knew it!" His voice rang out strong in the enormous hall, and deep violet eyes pinned the girl in an accusing stare. "I am Sir Bartholomew Ashley, and you are a wretched thief! I saw you when you wore the form of a boggan, and you came into my chambers, sneaking and skulking. Those shoes were the ones you wore before. Hand over my stolen property, wench, or feel the sting of my blade."

"Wench indeed!" cried Julia. "You foul spy! How long have you been following us, eh? Tell me that, Sir Bart! Don't happen to have any iron spikes in your cloak, do you? I might have known Eiluned treachery would be at our heels." Her words were a jibe, for no one could bear cold iron in the Dreaming. Then, she saw the sidhe's expression.

Something in the knight's face caused Julia to shudder. It was a bizarre mix of pain, regret and fury, and the sidhe knew she'd struck a nerve. Though she well knew that iron could not exist in the Dreaming, she pressed her attack. "So," she murmured, with the feeling that some other force was guiding her tongue, "you

have had cold iron upon your person, and perhaps more than once you've wielded such metal in secret. What, then, have you slain others before? Perhaps recently? Or even some twenty-odd years in the past?" Julia's mind reeled in horror even as the words left her lips. *What am I saying? I never even got a peek at the Eiluned histories, and yet... Yes, I am certain this is true. Surely the Dreaming has intended for me to know this terrible secret.*

Sir Bartholomew's head snapped up. "Ours were not the only hands bearing iron knives that fine spring day. And we knew aright the Fiona were too cowardly to do what had to be done. Sever the serpent's head, before it can strike!" The knight's eyes narrowed. "You should not have stolen our book, nor read it. Now your life is forfeit, as are those of this mortal and commoner. I did not participate in that dark Beltaine, but neither shall this secret be allowed to leave this room, for the good of all Kithain. You speak of old days, best forgotten. But I can see that you would not keep such things quiet. Kneel and meet your death bravely, and you shall know a swift and merciful end. Cause me to waste my time chasing you around, and I will see to it that you suffer greatly."

"Hah!" cried Julia, throwing Cruithne's footstool at the Eiluned. He ducked easily and made to run her through.

Suddenly, the scent of brimstone filled the great hall. And Julia suddenly realized the reason she had always felt ill at ease in the old castle; it was not necessarily built for human proportions. The place was much more like a Gothic cathedral than a defensible castle, and now she saw why. Cruithne Alexis was gone, and in his place crouched a large, coiled dragon. The ancient creature's hide was a mix of black and ochre red, and his terrible eyes — they were no longer green flecked with gold, but a mass of swirling, hypnotic colors. Julia looked away lest she drown in their depths.

"Children's night is over," yawned the beast. "You, knight of House Eiluned. Is the memory of your kind so fleeting that you have forgotten me, half-elf? Let me remind you, shall I?" He reared, spreading wide his wings until he brushed the walls of the vast hall. The worm's bellowed words shook the stone and threatened to burst Julia's eardrums.

"I am Cruithne Alexis, last of the line of Vermithrax, Scourge of Denbigh, Riddlemaker, Gamemaster, Scarab Foe! And I am your bane, foolish trove-thief!" At a wave of his talons, the great doors crashed shut.

"Before the fall of Cordoba, before the rise of Alexandria, before the first scroll was scribed in Carthage, Secret-Stealer, your house and mine were at war."

Julia did not panic at sight of the drake, but she saw Marina quivering and shaking, desperately trying not to bolt. She pulled the satyr into her arms and pressed against a corner of the fireplace wall. Behind her in the hall, Sir Bartholomew's laugh held no fear.

"And tonight, the war is won, for I hold a sword to douse any drake's breath. Behold Wurmreaver, whose blade drank deep of the blood of Silverwrath and all her clan!"

The dragon stilled for a moment, then lowered his great head to peer at the weapon. If a dragon could grin, Cruithne

did so. "I know that blade well. It's true enough that it struck down all of the blood of Silverwrath, for *that was what it was forged to do*. And need I remind you, little changeling, that I am Cruithne, of the line of Vermithrax?"

In the pregnant pause, Julia glanced up at the knight, who stood with doubt and fear in his eyes. Then, resolve hardened his features. He raised his blade and charged the dragon, a brilliant fiery nimbus surrounding his body and a warcry on his lips. Then all the world was flame, and Julia shielded Marina as heat scorched her bare skin and the inferno's roar drowned out all other sound.

The room was quiet. Julia looked around and saw Cruithne, again the elderly sage, standing over a blackened, twisted wreck of a knight at his feet. In the corpse's hand, Wurmreaver gleamed, unmarred by the flame which had fused and warped the knight's armor.

"And I also know that it was not by Sir Bartholomew's tender hand that Silverwrath's line met its end." He pointed to the sword, which shone with unnatural brilliance in the firelight. "Marina, please take the sword to the third vault. I cannot touch it myself."

Julia stared, then laughed. "You lied to him! You said it couldn't harm you! I thought dragons couldn't lie outright."

The sage regarded her with a look of wry amusement. "Yes, I've heard that bit of lore as well. But in this case, little faerie, I did not lie. The sword killed a noble line of dragons. And obviously, I am not of that line."

Julia laughed even harder. "But you implied that it could only slay the others, not you! And he believed it!"

Cruithne smiled. "If not believed, at least doubted. For the sword to triumph, it requires a steadfast heart and unshakable faith. For that moment, he lacked both. As he failed the sword, so the blade failed him. Let that be a lesson to you, youngling: cross wits with a dragon at your own peril." His stare turned cold once more. "Now, it is best that you leave, and do not come again. Our bargain is at an end, and as a general rule, I dislike noble faeries. You've been palatable enough, I suppose. Perhaps in another century or two I might be willing to see you again. But for now, I'll settle for dealing with the satyr." He turned his back on them and slowly climbed the stairs at the far end of the hall. Julia knew a dismissal when she saw one and pulled Marina along with her out the door.

The sidhe set a pace as if a stout wind was at her back; more than once she had to wait for her companion who seemed to be dawdling.

"Hurry, we must return home. Do you realize how much the commoners would give to know of House Eiluned's deed?" As she ran down the path from the keep, Julia did not see the small disk of mica slip from her pouch. Marina stopped for just a moment, examined the object and moved on; she recognized it as a dragon scale, the shiny thing Cruithne Alexis had given Julia to prevent the Mists from clouding her memories. Marina left it lying where she saw it.

Past Aldo's inn, Julia ran, sticking to the path, moving from the lands of the Far Dreaming into the Near Dreaming. The Firchlís passed her, almost unnoticed. Then, before her, she saw



the gated entrance to the gardens near her home.

"Wait!" called Marina, not the least bit out of breath. "Are you ready to leave so soon? I thought... Well, you said before that once you were yourself again that..." Her hand wavered in the air, and Julia took it.

"Aye, so I did, and so we shall return here to find the joy of each other's company. Soon. I gave you my promise to stay with you. But I must get word to the others. Don't you see?" As she stepped through the morning glories into the mortal lands, Julia missed the look of eternal regret on the satyr's face.



"It's hard to believe it really happened now," sighed Julia, as she brought coffee and scones into the bedroom. *The Fool's Luck: Journal of a Boggan of No Import*, a rough, handwritten work, lay strewn across the tousled covers.

"Yep," said Marina. "All your writing, too. I'm sorry we can't remember how it all came about. The last thing I recall was popping off into the Dreaming, coming back to find you were a boggan and then dragging you around half the world to yack at every commoner we could find. And then, getting you changed back yesterday, I believe it was."

"Well, I certainly remember how to make good biscuits," laughed Julia. Then she sobered. "And I remember my promise, to help make a lasting peace between all the kith. How could I forget that? But it's the damndest thing," she continued, "that I suddenly have the most wretched worry about House Eiluned."

"Oh?" said Marina, her voice rising a note.

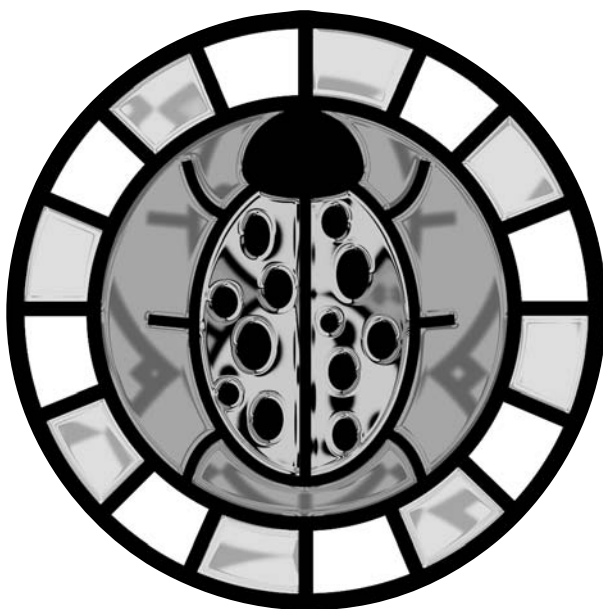
"Yes. Weird, huh? I mean, sure, they can be a bit standoffish, but I've never had any trouble from them. But now...well, it's just a feeling of deep concern. Perhaps there's some clues in this," she said, pointing to the manuscript. "Ah well. Oops, look, I forgot the sugar. Be back in a second." Julia scampered off, leaving Marina alone.

"If the truth were known," whispered the satyr softly, "how many innocent lives would be lost — Eiluned as well as commoner. You have sworn an oath, dear Julia, to build peace. Yet if you let loose that terrible secret, then all your dreams would turn to ashes. Forgive me this one lie, and may there be no others between us."

The satyr ate a scone smeared with strawberry jam and wondered what else she could come up with to amuse her sidhe companion.



CHAPTER SIX: CAVALCADE OF COMMONERS



Satyr Highwayman

*I was a highwayman. Along the coach roads I did ride
With sword and pistol by my side*

*Many a young maid lost her baubles to my trade
Many a soldier shed his lifeblood on my blade*

— The Highwaymen, *The Highwayman*

Quote: *Stand and deliver, jackass.*

Background: Your teachers called you a problem kid. The counselor said you were antiauthoritarian. Your parents called you a punk and a troublemaker. You were a prime candidate for gang membership, except that you preferred to pull pranks and commit petty vandalism on your own.

During the summer, your folks would drop you off at the dollar theater and forget about you for the afternoon. It was dullsville most of the time; some of the movies were ancient, and one or two were even older than you were! You usually had the screen all to yourself, and the usher was usually too busy making out with the concessions attendant to clear you out of the theater. Between showings, you'd daydream your way into the story. You discovered you liked some of the old movies, particularly Zorro, the Lone Ranger, and the Three Musketeers. It wasn't the idea of doing good and righting wrongs that turned you on. Instead you liked thought of outwitting and outfighting The Man.

It was on one particular afternoon, as Robin Hood defeated the Sheriff of Nottingham, that everything changed. You imagined that it was you with the sword, making your principal beg for mercy, and then BOOM! the world shifted. Another of your kith followed the Glamour trail straight to you and set about teaching you about being a changeling. You ran away for the last time, and a few cantrips ensured the parental units wouldn't come looking for you.

A year later, a few locals gathered to see you Sained. The baron who presided was the most arrogant fop you'd ever met (worse even than your principal). It wasn't long before you embarked on your new life of crime, acting out your theater fantasies.

Robbing drunken knights earned you spending money, but presented no challenge. Lifting that shipment of dross from the count's reeve was something else entirely. The thrill as that little boggan toady cowered before your blade! The challenge of eluding the knights and thanes scouring the county for you! To walk around in broad daylight, scorning the price on your head! You were hooked.

Many commoners and a few romantics among the nobility see you as a dashing and virtuous righter of wrongs. Though you have your Errol Flynn moments, there's nothing of Robin Hood in you; while

you get a kick bringing a vaunted noble to his knees, you rob from the rich mostly because they're the ones with money. Of course, money isn't everything, and since you divested a young sidhe maiden of something other than her purse the duchy has been too hot for comfort. Still, there's a whole kingdom just waiting to share the wealth.

Roleplaying hints: You are dashing and daring, quick with a blade and a word, and you like nothing better than to spite and humiliate the rich and pompous. Enjoy the spoils, but always keep an eye out for escape routes, undercover knights and the next potential heist.

Equipment: Fast car, chimerical rapier, eyemask, pistol, stash of cash and dross.



Roots Luck.

The Way of the Commoner

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Unseelie*
Legacies: *Outlaw/Wayfarer*
Title:

Seeming: *Wilder*
Kith: *Satyr*
Motley:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☐☐☐☐☐
Dexterity ☐☐☐☐☐
Stamina ☐☐☐☐☐

Social

Charisma ☐☐☐☐☐
Manipulation ☐☐☐☐☐
Appearance ☐☐☐☐☐

Mental

Perception ☐☐☐☐☐
Intelligence ☐☐☐☐☐
Wits ☐☐☐☐☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☐☐☐☐☐
Athletics ☐☐☐☐☐
Brawl ☐☐☐☐☐
Dodge ☐☐☐☐☐
Empathy ☐☐☐☐☐
Intimidation ☐☐☐☐☐
Kenning ☐☐☐☐☐
Persuasion ☐☐☐☐☐
Streetwise ☐☐☐☐☐
Subterfuge ☐☐☐☐☐

Skills

Crafts ☐☐☐☐☐
Drive ☐☐☐☐☐
Etiquette ☐☐☐☐☐
Firearms ☐☐☐☐☐
Leadership ☐☐☐☐☐
Melee ☐☐☐☐☐
Performance ☐☐☐☐☐
Security ☐☐☐☐☐
Stealth ☐☐☐☐☐
Survival ☐☐☐☐☐

Knowledges

Computer ☐☐☐☐☐
Enigmas ☐☐☐☐☐
Gremayre ☐☐☐☐☐
Investigation ☐☐☐☐☐
Law ☐☐☐☐☐
Linguistics ☐☐☐☐☐
Lore ☐☐☐☐☐
Medicine ☐☐☐☐☐
Politics ☐☐☐☐☐
Science ☐☐☐☐☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Chimera ☐☐☐☐☐
Mentor ☐☐☐☐☐
Resources ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Arts

Chicanery ☐☐☐☐☐
Legerdemain ☐☐☐☐☐
Wayfare ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Realms

Actor ☐☐☐☐☐
Fae ☐☐☐☐☐
Prop ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Other Traits

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Glamour

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Willpower

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Banality

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

| | Real | Chimerical |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bruised | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hurt | -1 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Injured | -1 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wounded | -2 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mauled | -2 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crippled | -5 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Incapacitated | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

= Ravaging/ Musing Threshold =

= Birthrights/ Frailties =

Experience:

Gift of Pan, Physical Prowess/ Passion's Curse

Eshu Gamer

Quote: *I don't care what it says on page 122! I'm running this game.*

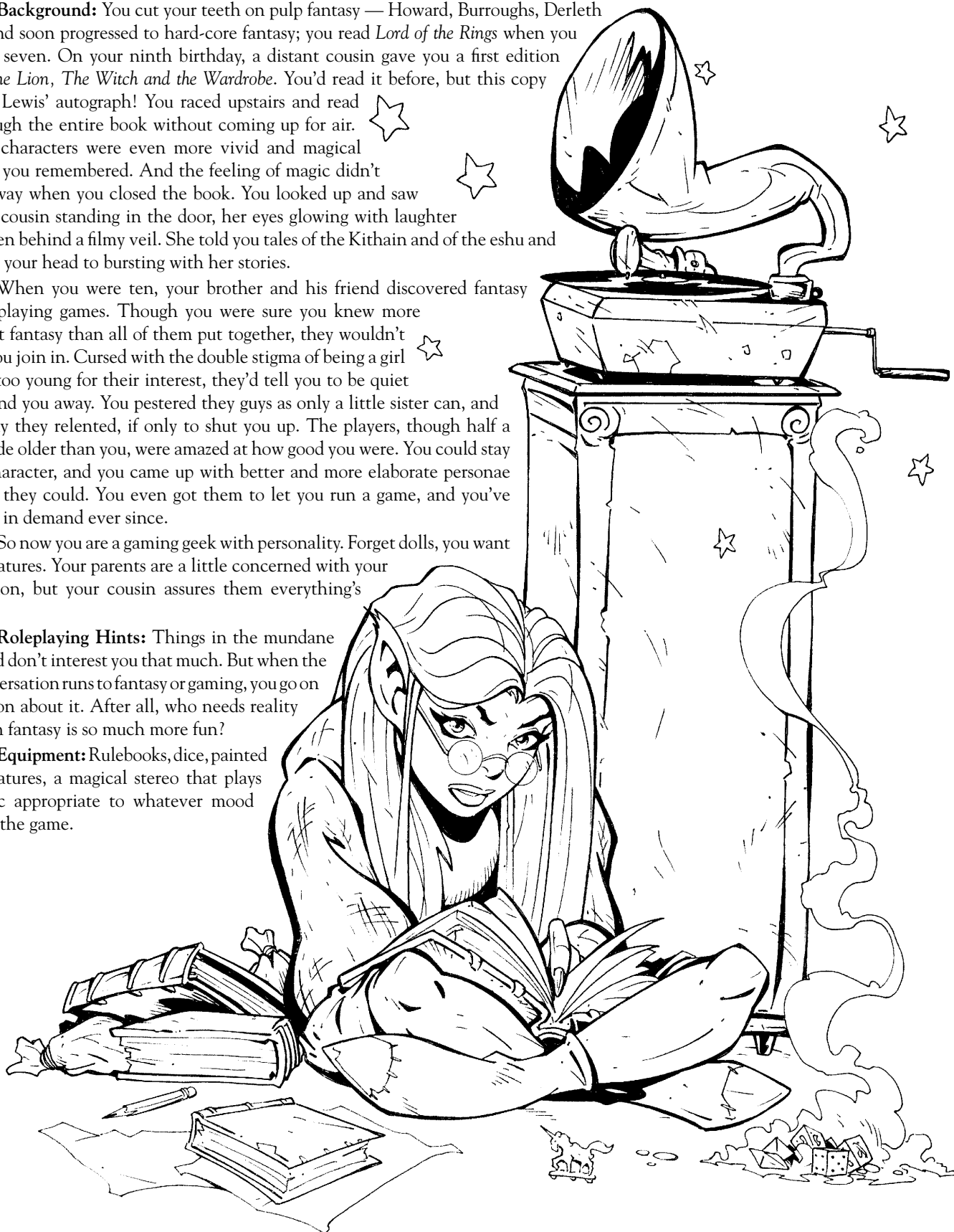
Background: You cut your teeth on pulp fantasy — Howard, Burroughs, Derleth — and soon progressed to hard-core fantasy; you read *Lord of the Rings* when you were seven. On your ninth birthday, a distant cousin gave you a first edition of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. You'd read it before, but this copy bore Lewis' autograph! You raced upstairs and read through the entire book without coming up for air. The characters were even more vivid and magical than you remembered. And the feeling of magic didn't go away when you closed the book. You looked up and saw your cousin standing in the door, her eyes glowing with laughter hidden behind a filmy veil. She told you tales of the Kithain and of the eshu and filled your head to bursting with her stories.

When you were ten, your brother and his friend discovered fantasy role-playing games. Though you were sure you knew more about fantasy than all of them put together, they wouldn't let you join in. Cursed with the double stigma of being a girl and too young for their interest, they'd tell you to be quiet or send you away. You pestered they guys as only a little sister can, and finally they relented, if only to shut you up. The players, though half a decade older than you, were amazed at how good you were. You could stay in character, and you came up with better and more elaborate personae than they could. You even got them to let you run a game, and you've been in demand ever since.

So now you are a gaming geek with personality. Forget dolls, you want miniatures. Your parents are a little concerned with your fixation, but your cousin assures them everything's okay.

Roleplaying Hints: Things in the mundane world don't interest you that much. But when the conversation runs to fantasy or gaming, you go on and on about it. After all, who needs reality when fantasy is so much more fun?

Equipment: Rulebooks, dice, painted miniatures, a magical stereo that plays music appropriate to whatever mood suits the game.



Roots Luck.

The Way of the Commoner

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Seelie*
Legacies: *Sage/Pandora*
Title:

Seeming: *Childling*
Kith: *Eshu*
Motley:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●○○○○
Dexterity ●●○○○
Stamina ●●●○○

Social

Charisma ●●●○○
Manipulation ●●○○○
Appearance ●●●○○

Mental

Perception ●●○○○
Intelligence ●●●○○
Wits ●●●○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ●○○○○
Athletics ●○○○○
Brawl ●○○○○
Dodge ●○○○○
Empathy ●●○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Kenning ●●●○○
Persuasion ●●●○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge ●○○○○

Skills

Crafts ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○
Etiquette ●●○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Leadership ●○○○○
Melee ○○○○○
Performance ●○○○○
Security ○○○○○
Stealth ●○○○○
Survival ○○○○○

Knowledges

Computer ●●○○○
Enigmas ●●●○○
Gremayre ●●●○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Law ○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○
Lore ●○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Dreamers ●●●○○
Mentor ●●●○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Arts

Chicanery ●○○○○
Legerdemain ●○○○○
Soothsay ●●○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Realms

Actor ●●○○○
Scene ●○○○○
Time ●●○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Other Traits

Glamour

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

= Ravaging/ Musing Threshold =

Banality

● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Experience:

Health

| | | Real | Chimerical |
|---------------|----|------|------------|
| Bruised | | □ | □ |
| Hurt | -1 | □ | □ |
| Injured | -1 | □ | □ |
| Wounded | -2 | □ | □ |
| Mauled | -2 | □ | □ |
| Crippled | -5 | □ | □ |
| Incapacitated | | □ | □ |

= Birthrights/ Frailties =

*Spirit Pathways, Talecraft/
Recklessness*

Sluagh Mortician

Quote: *The police were clumsy. I found the needle mark, plain as the moon. But I'll be discreet, provided the new count proves more...generous than his predecessor. <dab, dab> You see? Like new.*

Background: Face it, no eight-year-old aspires to be a mortician when he grows up. You decided at age twelve. That was when your uncle had his coronary. The contorted body held a sick fascination for you; you watched it for hours as it cooled and turned waxy. Rigor mortis was just setting in when your parents came home. Poor folks, they said you were never quite right after that experience, and they sent you to several counselors and shrinks. None could help you, for you weren't traumatized; you had discovered your true nature. It wasn't long after you changed that others crawled out of the dark corners to introduce you to your new life — the life of a sluagh.

Your passion was death, and you knew a job as a medical examiner was the perfect thing for you. Unfortunately, you couldn't hack med school. It wasn't the blood or the tedious studying, of course, but the fact that you weren't cut out for the college life — too loud, too bright. So you apprenticed with a sympathetic undertaker who was so pleased with your interest that he didn't dwell too long on your idiosyncrasies. A quick study, you spent your free time reading books on forensic pathology and the philosophical nature of death.

You were perusing a medical text as you looked over a young man who had jumped from a bridge. You found it most surprising and quite delightful when a willowy voice informed you that he had been pushed. Elated with this new discovery, you were eager to listen to his tale of woe. With the information he gave you, an anonymous call to the police eventually put the murderer behind bars. In turn, the grateful wraith peeked in on the annoying Sir Trotwhollop and relayed to you some very choice tidbits indeed. That, as they say, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Since then, you've acquired your own successful funeral parlor and a spiritual spy ring. More than a few of your *clients* aren't quite ready to go gently into that good night and are happy someone in the skinlands can still see them. You make a habit of tidying up unfinished business for them, and they are usually quite generous in assisting you in their own way. What's more, the living occasionally do you favors to keep you from revealing what you know.

Roleplaying Hints: Unfailingly polite, you have the "compassionate solemnity" look down to a science. Sometimes it's all you can do to maintain that look, listening to friends and relatives saying what they really thought about the deceased, and hearing the wraith's scathing retorts.

Equipment: Pocket tape recorder, bone saw, magnifying glass, worn anatomy books.

Roots Luck.

The Way of the Commoner

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Unseelie*
Legacies: *Fatalist/Hermit*
Title:

Seeming: *Wilder*
Kith: *Sluagh*
Motley:

Attributes

| Physical | | Social | | Mental | |
|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Strength | ●●○○○ | Charisma | ●●○○○ | Perception | ●●●○○ |
| Dexterity | ●●○○○ | Manipulation | ●●●○○ | Intelligence | ●●●○○ |
| Stamina | ●●○○○ | Appearance | ●●○○○ | Wits | ●●●○○ |

Abilities

| Talents | | Skills | | Knowledges | |
|--------------|-------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Alertness | ●○○○○ | Crafts | ●○○○○ | Computer | ○○○○○ |
| Athletics | ○○○○○ | Drive | ○○○○○ | Enigmas | ●○○○○ |
| Brawl | ○○○○○ | Etiquette | ●●●○○ | Gremayre | ●○○○○ |
| Dodge | ●○○○○ | Firearms | ○○○○○ | Investigation | ●●●○○ |
| Empathy | ●●○○○ | Leadership | ○○○○○ | Law | ○○○○○ |
| Intimidation | ○○○○○ | Melee | ○○○○○ | Linguistics | ○○○○○ |
| Kenning | ●○○○○ | Performance | ○○○○○ | Lore | ●●●○○ |
| Persuasion | ●●○○○ | Security | ○○○○○ | Medicine | ●●●○○ |
| Streetwise | ○○○○○ | Stealth | ●○○○○ | Politics | ○○○○○ |
| Subterfuge | ●●○○○ | Survival | ○○○○○ | Science | ●●●○○ |

Advantages

| Backgrounds | | Arts | | Realms | |
|------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| <i>Contacts</i> | ●●●○○ | <i>Legerdemain</i> | ●○○○○ | <i>Actor</i> | ●●●○○ |
| <i>Resources</i> | ●●●○○ | <i>Soothsay</i> | ●●○○○ | <i>Scene</i> | ●○○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | <i>Time</i> | ●●○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ |

Other Traits

Glamour

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Ravaging/Consuming Threshold

Experience:

Banality

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

| | | Real | Chimerical |
|---------------|----|------|------------|
| Bruised | | □ | □ |
| Hurt | -1 | □ | □ |
| Injured | -1 | □ | □ |
| Wounded | -2 | □ | □ |
| Mauled | -2 | □ | □ |
| Crippled | -5 | □ | □ |
| Incapacitated | | □ | □ |

Birthrights/Frailties

*Squirm, Sharpened Senses/
Curse of Silence*

Troll Bartender

Let's go down to the Sunset Grill
And watch the working girls go by...
There's an old man there from the Old
World
To him, it's all the same
Calls all his customers by name

— Don Henley, *Sunset Grill*

Quote: Nope, haven't seen him around here in a while. What should I tell him when I see him? Alright, bye. *click* Hey, Pete, your wife called again.

Background: Your career as a warrior was brutally short; it ended with one leg lost to the maw of a cragworm. An older troll offered you a job behind the bar at his freehold, *The Artful Codger*. You didn't feel wiping down the bar was as important as defending a freehold, but your options were limited. Trying to salvage some honor, you threw yourself into the job, and soon found you enjoyed it. You got pretty good at bartending and formed a rapport with the local fae regulars — Seelie commoners, all. After a couple of years, your mentor came to you one day and said he had tired of the view and was heading west. He left his freehold in your capable hands.

You renamed it *Common Ground* and let it be known that all were welcome — noble, common, Seelie or otherwise. You also made it clear that anyone who caused trouble, particularly political trouble, would be deeply sorry. You swore to defend the bar, the people who relied on it and the principles of coexistence. Soon, the *Common Ground* was a popular meeting place; though sidhe are still a rarity, members of every kith come in to blow off steam and enjoy themselves.

Then, the new baron came to you with a startling proposition. He needed a reeve to act as a liaison with the commoners in his barony; he wanted someone the populace trusted. You told him your oath was to your freehold and those who used it, and to none other; astoundingly, he said he didn't require an oath, for your loyalty was right where it needed to be.

After some consideration, you agreed. At first, business slacked a bit; after all, some regarded you as a sell-out. With time, they realized you were the same old guy, and better able to get them more of a say in court. Presently, you are in a position of great influence; you have the baron's ear, and the commoners still respect you. You wouldn't think of abusing your privilege; you would be just as content running the bar, but your duty lies with your patrons.

Roleplaying Hints: Give your patrons what they need, whether it's a sympathetic ear, a new joke, or a Whiskey Collins. Don't stand for fighting or cantrips in your bar.

Equipment: Mr. Boston™ Bartender's Guide, bar towel, tip jar. Chimerical bar cat that can sense when cantrips are being used.

The Fool's Luck: The U

Roots Luck.

The Way of the Commoner

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Seelie*
Legacies: *Regent/Wretch*
Title: *Knight*

Seeming: *Grump*
Kith: *Troll*
Motley:

Attributes

| Physical | | Social | | Mental | |
|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Strength | ●●●●● | Charisma | ●●●●● | Perception | ●●●●● |
| Dexterity | ●●●●● | Manipulation | ●●●●● | Intelligence | ●●●●● |
| Stamina | ●●●●● | Appearance | ●●●●● | Wits | ●●●●● |

Abilities

| Talents | | Skills | | Knowledges | |
|--------------|-------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Alertness | ●●●●● | Crafts | ○○○○○ | Computer | ○○○○○ |
| Athletics | ●●●●● | Drive | ●●●●● | Enigmas | ○○○○○ |
| Brawl | ●●●●● | Etiquette | ●●●●● | Greymare | ○○○○○ |
| Dodge | ●●●●● | Firearms | ●●●●● | Investigation | ●●●●● |
| Empathy | ●●●●● | Leadership | ●●●●● | Law | ●●●●● |
| Intimidation | ●●●●● | Melee | ●●●●● | Linguistics | ○○○○○ |
| Kenning | ○○○○○ | Performance | ○○○○○ | Lore | ○○○○○ |
| Persuasion | ●●●●● | Security | ●●●●● | Medicine | ●●●●● |
| Streetwise | ○○○○○ | Stealth | ○○○○○ | Politics | ●●●●● |
| Subterfuge | ○○○○○ | Survival | ○○○○○ | Science | ○○○○○ |

Advantages

| Backgrounds | | Arts | | Realms | |
|--------------------|-------|------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| <i>Remembrance</i> | ●●●●● | <i>Primal</i> | ●●●●● | <i>Actor</i> | ●●●●● |
| <i>Resources</i> | ●●●●● | <i>Sovereign</i> | ●●●●● | <i>Fae</i> | ●●●●● |
| <i>Title</i> | ●●●●● | | ○○○○○ | <i>Scene</i> | ●●●●● |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ |

Other Traits

Lame (3-point Flaw)

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□

Ravaging/Consuming Threshold

Banality

●●●●●○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□

Health

| | | Real | Chimerical |
|---------------|----|------|------------|
| Bruised | | □ | □ |
| Hurt | -1 | □ | □ |
| Injured | -1 | □ | □ |
| Wounded | -2 | □ | □ |
| Mauled | -2 | □ | □ |
| Crippled | -5 | □ | □ |
| Incapacitated | | □ | □ |

Birthrights/Frailties

*Titan's Power, Stubbornness/
Bond of Duty*

Experience:

Redcap Reenactor

Quote: *No shit, there we were. Me and my company were marching towards the Red Banners, when Hanulf points out the units rushing up our flank. And then spearmen pop out of the woods to our rear! I figured we were outnumbered about five to one. I smiles at Hanulf, and he smiles at me. This was a perfect time to try out what we liked to call "The Maneuver"...*

Background: War was in your blood, even as a child. Military history enthralled you. The whys of war, the policies behind conflict, held no interest for you. It's how they maneuvered around the battlefield, the victors and the defeated, and how they got that way. Did William the Bastard really feign a retreat at Hastings, or was it the real thing? What inspired Cham-

berlain to attempt the "garden gate" maneuver at Little Round Top? You saw every war movie ever made, and then reenacted what you saw, charging up hills and taking imaginary bunkers, killing thousands of imaginary Germans, Yankees, and Gauls.

You were in high school when a chapter of the Association for Medieval Study was founded in a nearby college. You saw people in armor made from carpet and old street signs, wielding wooden swords, and you decided that was where you wanted to be. The people in the AMS were impressed by your knowledge and skill, to say nothing of your enthusiasm in tourneys and on the field. You emerged victorious in your first tournament. Flushed with the victory, you knelt before the local baron to claim your prize. The world began to spin, and when you looked up, the king was...blue.

Shortly after your Saining came the Resurgence. When war was declared, you were more than ready to join in. While your first battles were losses, you acquitted yourself well and quickly became a captain. Though respecting the sidhe's grasp of tactics, you were determined that they should not triumph. You trained your company whenever you had the opportunity, and before long the sight of your company on the field would put fear into your enemy. You always considered being the chief target for arrows and cantrips a mark of distinction and honor, anyway.

Well, the Accordance War is over...for the moment. In the meantime, you've continued indulging your love of history, fighting by day and telling war stories by night. In addition to the AMS, you're a card-carrying member of reenactor guilds for the Civil War, Mountain Man and Revolutionary War. And when bragging in front of mortals gets old, you can tip back a few and reminisce about the good old days with your buddies at the VAW meeting hall.

Roleplay hints: War is your meat and drink. When you participate in it, you like to talk about it. Causes and reasons don't interest you much. You just like to fight.

Equipment: Military history book, two or three chimerical soldiers from whatever period you're thinking about at the moment, several weapons.



Roots Luck.

The Way of the Commoner

Name:

Player:

Chronicle:

Court: *Seelie*

Legacies: *Paladin/Beast*

Title:

Seeming: *Grump*

Kith: *Redcap*

Motley:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ☐☐☐☐☐
Dexterity ☐☐☐☐☐
Stamina ☐☐☐☐☐

Social

Charisma ☐☐☐☐☐
Manipulation ☐☐☐☐☐
Appearance ☐☐☐☐☐

Mental

Perception ☐☐☐☐☐
Intelligence ☐☐☐☐☐
Wits ☐☐☐☐☐

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ☐☐☐☐☐
Athletics ☐☐☐☐☐
Brawl ☐☐☐☐☐
Dodge ☐☐☐☐☐
Empathy ☐☐☐☐☐
Intimidation ☐☐☐☐☐
Kenning ☐☐☐☐☐
Persuasion ☐☐☐☐☐
Streetwise ☐☐☐☐☐
Subterfuge ☐☐☐☐☐

Skills

Crafts ☐☐☐☐☐
Drive ☐☐☐☐☐
Etiquette ☐☐☐☐☐
Firearms ☐☐☐☐☐
Leadership ☐☐☐☐☐
Melee ☐☐☐☐☐
Performance ☐☐☐☐☐
Security ☐☐☐☐☐
Stealth ☐☐☐☐☐
Survival ☐☐☐☐☐

Knowledges

Computer ☐☐☐☐☐
Enigmas ☐☐☐☐☐
Gremayre ☐☐☐☐☐
Investigation ☐☐☐☐☐
Law ☐☐☐☐☐
Linguistics ☐☐☐☐☐
Lore ☐☐☐☐☐
Medicine ☐☐☐☐☐
Politics ☐☐☐☐☐
Science ☐☐☐☐☐

Advantages

Backgrounds

Chimera ☐☐☐☐☐
Dreamers ☐☐☐☐☐
Resources ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Arts

Primal ☐☐☐☐☐
Wayfare ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Realms

Actor ☐☐☐☐☐
Fae ☐☐☐☐☐
Nature ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Other Traits

☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐

Glamour

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Willpower

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Banality

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

| | Real | Chimerical |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bruised | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hurt | -1 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Injured | -1 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wounded | -2 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mauled | -2 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crippled | -5 <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Incapacitated | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

= Ravaging/ Musing Threshold =

= Birthrights/ Frailties =

Experience:

Dark Appetite, Bully
Browbeat/ Bad Attitude

Boggan Doula

Quote: *Don't thank me; you did all the work. Besides, this isn't a job, it's what keeps me going.*

Background: When delivering and raising your own kids, the word *doula* never entered your mind. Having babies was a stressful but happy business, and though none of your little ones ever underwent a Chrysalis, you loved them all the same and gave them a childhood full of magic and wonder. That was a long time ago, and you're much older now. But you still love the excitement that surrounds bringing new life into the world. Becoming a doctor or a nurse was a bit too Banal for you, but then you heard about doulas. The name comes from the Greek word for an honored female servant who helped the lady of the house through childbearing. Modern-day doulas are caregivers, advisors and loving nurturers who work with expectant moms and dads to make the whole process more pleasant and memorable. They give massages, keep written records and help with all the little details that get overlooked during the most hectic hours of childbirth, and yet they don't have to provide medical or clinical skills. You were thrilled at the chance to work with people on such wonderful occasions, so you signed up for a training session, apprenticed and became certified in less than a year. So far, it's been a great experience, and your reputation as a doula is spreading. Even some of the other fae are stopping and taking notice at the unique way you've found to bask in the joy of mortals. You know you're aging more and more each day, but it's certain that you would have faded long before now had you not become a doula.

Roleplaying Hints: Be organized and efficient, but also kind and personable. People use your services because they trust you, and you encourage their faith by going the extra mile every time. Don't be afraid to disagree with a medical opinion if the prospective parents balk at some unnecessary hospital rule that has nothing to do with the care and safety of patients. You've got an even temper, but when you get irked, it's not a pretty sight, so remember to take disagreements out of mom's hearing range. Your clients, the parents and infant, come first, and as long as their best interests are being served, you're content. Take every opportunity to keep moms and dads informed about procedures, what's happening and how things are proceeding.

Equipment: Notebook, pager, camera, quick-reference text, small cooler with drinks and snacks.



Roots Luck.

The Way of the Commoner

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Seelie*
Legacies: *Bumpkin/Beast*
Title:

Seeming: *Grump*
Kith: *Boggan*
Motley:

Attributes

| Physical | | Social | | Mental | |
|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Strength | ●●○○○ | Charisma | ●●●○○ | Perception | ●●●○○ |
| Dexterity | ●●●○○ | Manipulation | ●●●○○ | Intelligence | ●●○○○ |
| Stamina | ●●●○○ | Appearance | ●●○○○ | Wits | ●●●○○ |

Abilities

| Talents | | Skills | | Knowledges | |
|--------------|-------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Alertness | ●○○○○ | Crafts | ●○○○○ | Computer | ●●○○○ |
| Athletics | ○○○○○ | Drive | ●●○○○ | Enigmas | ●●○○○ |
| Brawl | ○○○○○ | Etiquette | ●●○○○ | Gremayre | ●●○○○ |
| Dodge | ●○○○○ | Firearms | ○○○○○ | Investigation | ○○○○○ |
| Empathy | ●●●○○ | Leadership | ○○○○○ | Law | ●○○○○ |
| Intimidation | ●○○○○ | Melee | ○○○○○ | Linguistics | ●●●○○ |
| Kenning | ●●○○○ | Performance | ○○○○○ | Lore | ○○○○○ |
| Persuasion | ●●○○○ | Security | ○○○○○ | Medicine | ●●○○○ |
| Streetwise | ○○○○○ | Stealth | ○○○○○ | Politics | ○○○○○ |
| Subterfuge | ○○○○○ | Survival | ○○○○○ | Science | ●○○○○ |

Advantages

| Backgrounds | | Arts | | Realms | |
|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| <i>Contacts</i> | ●●○○○ | <i>Primal</i> | ●●○○○ | <i>Actor</i> | ●●●○○ |
| <i>Resources</i> | ●●●○○ | <i>Soothsay</i> | ●○○○○ | <i>Fae</i> | ●○○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | <i>Scene</i> | ●●○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ |
| | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ | | ○○○○○ |

Other Traits

Glamour

●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Ravaging/Consuming Threshold

Banality

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Health

| | | Real | Chimerical |
|---------------|----|------|------------|
| Bruised | | □ | □ |
| Hurt | -1 | □ | □ |
| Injured | -1 | □ | □ |
| Wounded | -2 | □ | □ |
| Mauled | -2 | □ | □ |
| Crippled | -5 | □ | □ |
| Incapacitated | | □ | □ |

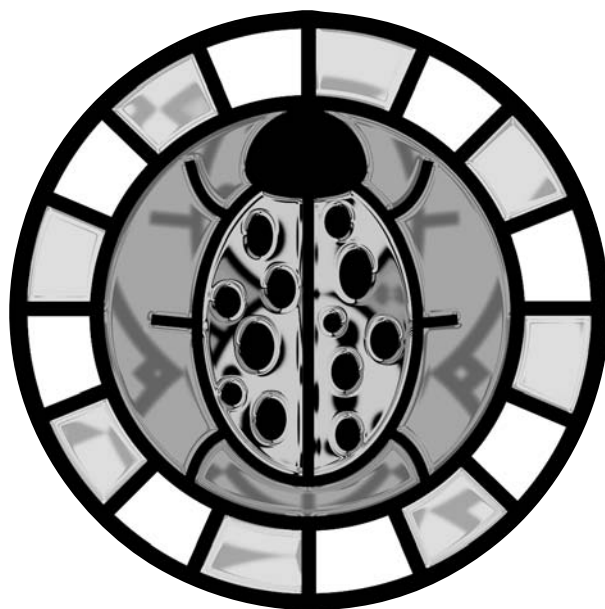
Birthrights/Frailties

*Craftwork, Social Dynamics/
Call of the Needy*

Experience:



APPENDIX: PISKIES AND SPRIGGAN



PISKIES

(PIZ-keys, sing. piskey)

Solitary and semi-nomadic, the piskies are a restless kith. They enjoy setting up residence for a few years, working and socializing with both mortals and Kithain, then moving on to new adventures. The piskies are especially fond of children, and they tend to befriend youngsters in need of a pal or a defender. Piskies get on well with humans, particularly nomads like themselves. Many prefer living near migrant workers, traveling with circuses or hopping trains with hoboes. The piskies bask in the Glamour of mortals soaking in new sights and sensations, and members of this kith never make judgments about tattered clothing or simple meals. Seelie piskies believe in the inherent goodness of most mortals and fae; they are trusting and perhaps a bit naive. Unseelie piskies are much more jaded and cynical, never afraid to use biting sarcasm.

They are useful messengers and guides, and don't shirk from hard work; often, they'll labor alongside their mortal friends in the fields, orchards or quarries, quick to climb a tree or crawl into a crevice if need be. Piskies may lack the eloquence of the eshu and the wisdom of the satyrs, but they are warmhearted and eager members of the commoner ranks.

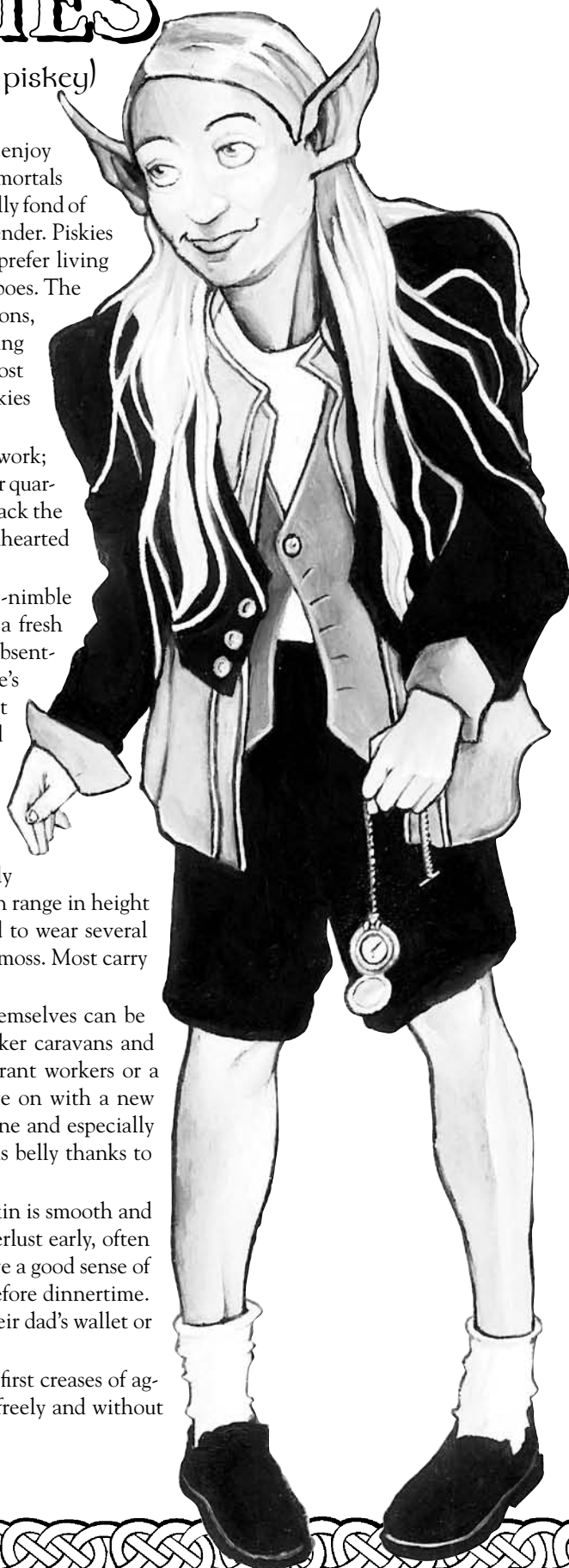
If these gentle-natured Kithain have a flaw, though, it's their too-nimble fingers. Piskies can't resist picking up a trinket from an open bag or a fresh baked loaf of bread from a windowsill. What's more annoying is how absent-minded they are about the whole affair; one will quickly forget that he's just devoured someone else's lunch and even feign innocence if caught red handed. Unseelie piskies tend to get quite touchy and hot tempered about this character flaw.

Appearance: Most piskies are easy to spot because of their beautiful silver hair; both males and females tend to wear it long, often in braids. Piskies also have olive-brown skin that gets more craggy, lined and weather beaten with age. Their eyes are huge and luminescent, usually gray or green, while the ears are large and pointed. Members of this kith range in height from four to five feet, usually with solid, muscular builds. Piskies tend to wear several layers of clothing, usually tattered, in earthy tones such as rust, gold or moss. Most carry a basic pack of tools, a supply of jerky and a random trinket or two.

Lifestyles: Piskies tend to frequent places where nomads like themselves can be found; these include migrant communities, train depots, airports, tinker caravans and circuses. Often, a piskey in her mortal form will join a group of migrant workers or a traveling carnival for a few years, settle in place she likes, then move on with a new cadre of wanderers when she gets bored. Piskies are friendly to everyone and especially kind to children. Many the penniless child has had a good meal in his belly thanks to the generosity of a piskey.

Childlings are quite cute, with bright eyes and big smiles. Their skin is smooth and lighter in color than it will be later in their lives. They develop wanderlust early, often running away from home, much to the terror of their parents. Most have a good sense of direction and come back safe and sound when they're ready, usually before dinnertime. Unseelie childlings, however, feel little guilt at stealing money from their dad's wallet or staying out for days on end.

Wilders have darker skin with many laugh lines, dimples and the first creases of aging. This is the most joyous time of a piskey's life, when she wanders freely and without



care; the world is her oyster. Wilders usually seek out groups of mortal nomads to befriend at this stage in their lives, and while they do settle in spots they like, the length of time tends to be shorter than that of grumps.

Grumps still travel a great deal, but their sojourns in one place tend to be much more extended than that of wilders. The piskey's skin is now quite dark and craggy; ears are tufted with silver hair, males wear long beards and backs are slightly bent from age and labor. Grumps still have bright eyes, though, and a penchant for letting children or others in need pour out their troubles.

Affinity: Actor

Birthrights

Nimble — All piskies add one to their Dexterity, even if this raises the Trait above 5; this Birthright is in effect at all times.

Human Bonds — Piskies are especially sensitive to the emotions of humans, particularly children. The difficulty of any Empathy rolls when dealing with mortals is reduced by two for adults and three for children, to a minimum of difficulty 3.

Piskies are also incredibly adaptable to their surroundings and cannot botch any Survival rolls.

Frailties

Kleptomania — If piskies see something that strikes their fancy, they simply have to have it. Note that this doesn't have to be anything terribly valuable by human standards; a pretty rock paperweight could be just as interesting to a piskey as a gold watch. To resist this impulse, the player must make a successful Willpower roll, difficulty 8. Most Seelie piskies give back stolen property with no hard feelings; an Unseelie piskey may be a different matter entirely.

Quote

Did I ever tell you about the time I got hired by the greatest show on earth? No? Here, have a piece of jerky and let me regale you with the tale of Megan the Great, Mistress of the High Wire.

Outlooks

Tom Franklin shares his grub and his mind:

On Boggans — Nice folks, real helpful and all that. Like us, they seem to enjoy the company of others a great deal. Their gossip can sometimes be a bore, though.

On Eshu — These adventurous storytellers are delightful companions; they love the open road and never refuse a chance to see something new. But watch out for their daredevil streak.

On Nockers — Maybe some of us have sharp tongues, but by gum, ours aren't barbed like the nockers! Do they ever dig for their own worms? Doubtful.

On Pooka — Pooka are real fun to talk with, but just be ready to jump ship at a moment's notice when they pull out their pranks. The little ones are terribly cute and can provide hours of amusement.

On Redcaps — I once saw a pack of mad dogs, and damn me if I wasn't reminded of the redcaps. They're vicious fools without a kind, generous bone in their bodies.

On Satyrs — They're pretty things and frisky to boot; they sing some of the best traveling ballads I've ever heard. But many times they don't know when to calm down and take a break.

On Sidhe — Physically, they are perfection, but many don't seem to realize there's a great big world beyond their castles and parties. That's even more sad when you consider they may have only one chance to live.

On Sluagh — While rather selfish and melancholy, these folks are sometimes willing to share good tales. You never know when having a sluagh friend might really come in handy.

On Trolls — Trolls are probably the most dependable people around. Don't let that stodgy exterior stop you from seeing their big hearts and rock-hard determination.

SPRIGGAN

(SPRIG-un)

Everything lovable about the piskies is despicable in the spriggan; they're hateful, greedy little bastards. Most are exceptionally cruel and play nasty tricks on downtrodden mortals. Not a few hang out with the most vicious redcaps and engage in all manner of terrible deeds. Generally lazy, spriggan are good at only one thing: guarding treasure. This is why the worst of the Unseelie and Shadow Court members bother to keep them around at all.

Seelie piskies are shocked and revolted by these evil Thallain cousins. Sometimes, the nastiest Unseelie piskies will hang out with the spriggan; a few even join their ranks. Needless to say, all Seelie and most Unseelie piskies tend to take a dim view of the spriggan in general and don't tolerate their presence for long. Fortunately, spriggan are relatively rare among the Thallain.

What strikes fear into both Seelie and Unseelie Kithain alike is the spriggan's penchant for kidnapping. When a human young one is taken, of course it's a tragedy, and many fae will be willing to assist in the rescue. But the terror increases when the child is a changeling. The birth of a faerie soul into a human child is, of course, a wondrous and happy event. For such a child to be taken by the spriggan and mentally tormented is cause for a seek and destroy mission against the kidnapper. Ninety-nine percent of the time, the child is found safe, if a bit cold and hungry. But dark and ancient legends speak of a few fae little ones that have not been rescued in time. If such an awful event was to occur in the present, the spriggan probably would be hunted to the ends of the earth and the Dreaming.

Appearance: Spriggan look like uglier versions of piskies. Rather than having large, bright eyes, those of the spriggan are small and beady. All seemings have the dark craggy skin of a piskey grump. Moreover, spriggan lack the lustrous silver hair of the piskies; theirs is a dull gray, often hanging in matted tangles. Spriggan smell bad and generally wear filthy clothes.

Affinity: Prop

Birthrights

Stalwart Guardians — All spriggan may add +2 to their Willpower when they accept an assignment to guard something. They will do everything possible to keep the treasure safe. After the job is finished, their Willpower reverts to its original level.

Sturm und Drang — With a successful Manipulation + Kenning roll, spriggan can cause fearsome rain and hail storms; the more successes, the nastier the storm. One success, for example, might cause a quick spring shower, while five successes could draw a storm that would damage crops and homes.



Frailties

Bad Nappers — Spriggan love to kidnap children. Generally, they don't harm their victims, other than a little taunting and teasing; what the spriggan enjoy most is the mayhem and terror this causes for both the youngsters and their parents. Kidnapping Kithain children is a real treat for these terrible Thallain, particularly if the child is sweet and good.

Quote

Awww, poor widdle thing. Did we spill your water? Too bad there's no more to be had today. How do you feel about that, you stinking pooka brat?

Outlooks

Gwen Tanglethorn gnaws the bones and chews the fat:

On Boggans — Almost too easy — they never shed their baby fat, never cut real teeth. Fun for a laugh, but nothing close to sport.

On Eshu — Hard ones to hoodwink and not very appreciative. Set me teeth on edge, they do.

On Nockers — I'd probably not set after a nocker unless I was truly hurting for entertainment. Four times out of five, if somethin' needs guarding, a nocker's the source.

On Pooka — Ripe sport. Oh, the looks on their poor puppy faces when they realize it's not fun anymore!

On Redcaps — It's so nice to have a bigger brother looking out for you... well, they don't care much about *us*, but as long as they share in our games, they'll be our friends.

On Satyrs — They think they're so wonderful, that everyone loves them. Hah! News flash, goat, maybe we play too rough for you.

On Sidhe — Step quietly around their lordships. They might not care much for the commoner brats, but even look sideways at one of theirs, and... uurggh....

On Sluagh — Sneakers and snoops. At least they know enough to realize we don't want trespassers in our holes.

On Trolls — All the worst about the Sidhe and then some. Spider Jak once tried for a troll's ward, more fool he. There's no mercy in them for the likes of us.

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